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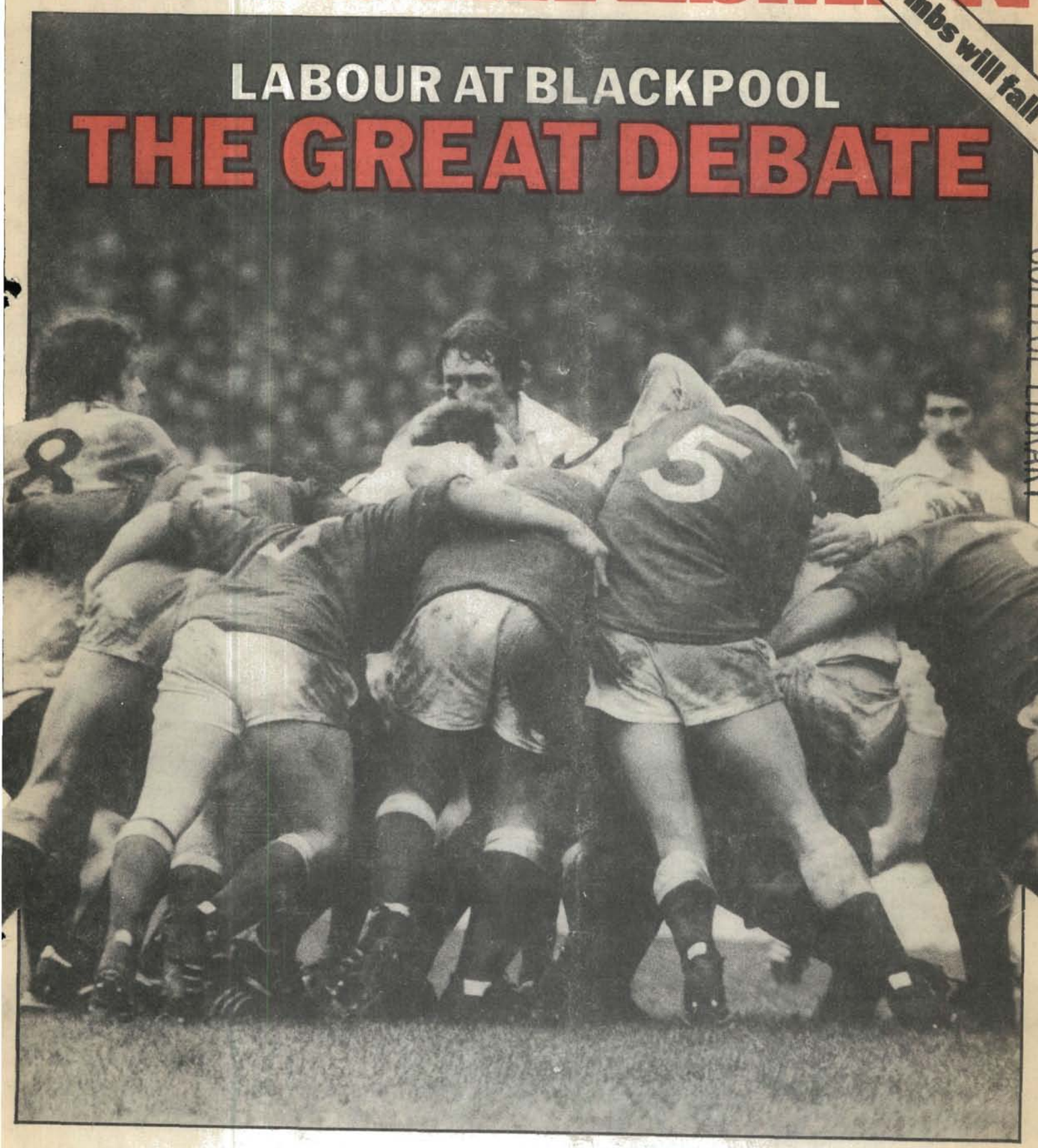
NEW STATESMAN

Where the bombs will fall



LABOUR AT BLACKPOOL
THE GREAT DEBATE

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Polls, socialism & Monty Python
Barbara Castle & the morality of the Left
Fiddling the figures in the defence debate
The press barons: the secrets of their souls

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NEW STATESMAN
Vol 100 26 September 1980 No 2583

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NOTES

Government to fix the 'free market'

Mick Hamer writes: In a desperate attempt to interest local authorities in the 'trial areas' where operators can run buses without a licence, Transport Minister Norman Fowler is offering to give away mini-buses and substantial cash incentives. These tactics somewhat undermine the political claims that the trial areas are an attempt to prove that the bus service will work better if left to the freeplay of the market without any regulation (since the 1930s buses in Britain have had to be licensed). Fowler claims the trial areas — authorised under the 1980 Transport Act, which comes into force next month — will help the rural areas. The bus industry expects rural services to decline as established operators face competition on their profitable routes and have to cut back the unprofitable (rural) ones. Fowler's Department has been trying to ensure that at least one authority includes a major highway route in its trial area.

Most of the initial enquiries about trial areas received by the Department of Transport came from areas with extremely bad transport, making Fowler worry that his policy might not work and thus not have general application. The three remaining counties that are believed to be showing any active interest have thus been subject to solicitous advances.

Devon is furthest advanced in negotiations with the Department. The county's original plan to make the whole of Devon a trial area has been dropped in the face of opposition from many district councils. Three districts — including the Exeter area — remain. Fowler visited Exeter last week to talk to councillors and officials (the council is making its decision as the *NS* goes to press). He offered to pay £500,000 as a 'contingency fund' if the trial area collapsed and public transport had to be restored. In addition to hinting at other unspecified inducements Fowler will be paying for new minibuses for any new operator — thus placing existing operators at a disadvantage.

In Norfolk the Department of Transport has persuaded the county to extend its proposed predominantly rural trial area to include access to Norwich and Lynn, but to exclude operations within these towns. As presently proposed, unlicensed buses could run from Lynn to Norwich — one of the few profitable routes in North Norfolk. Again in the Aylesbury Vale area in Buckinghamshire the Department has pressed the local authority to include a major transport corridor. But, nervous of the problems that cross-boundary services might cause, Bucks is beginning to get cold feet and is likely to wait and see how other sections of the Transport Act work before doing anything.

The price of Kim's life

Donald Kirk writes from Seoul: To outward appearances, the military regime of President (lately General) Chun Doo Hwan is spurning pleas from both the US and Japan to spare the life of Kim Dae Jung, who was sentenced to death by a military tribunal here last week. Beneath the public posturing, however, Korean officials have privately told American diplomats that Chun might commute Kim's sentence to life imprisonment if he could be sure of 'whole-hearted support' from the US government. What this means is that Chun would prefer it if the White House and State Department would refrain from any more critical comments on the way in which he suppressed all opposition during his speedy ascent to power.

President Chun now has about six months in which to make plans, while a military appeals court and then the supreme court go through the motions of 'reviewing' the sentence. The danger of fresh political turmoil may work in Kim's favour. 'Of course, there will be a severe reaction if he is hanged,' said one dissident. 'There will be another Kwangju — not just in a single city but elsewhere.'

The prediction of 'another Kwangju' refers to the city near Kim's birthplace in south-west Korea, where student-led guerrillas staged an abortive revolt in his name in May. Reports have reached Seoul that a military tribunal is secretly trying leaders of the Kwangju revolt, and is still holding hundreds of suspects. Kim himself was accused of helping to plan and finance the rebellion, even though it broke out two days after he was arrested.

The greatest threat to Chun may come not from student rebellions but from economic problems. With inflation galloping along at 30 per cent and the Gross National Product declining this year for the first time in 20 years, the government has introduced reforms aimed at revitalising the economy and attracting new foreign investment. If 'political elements' combine with disaffected workers, the 'strong-man' President may come to look a little less sure of himself.

Food and education issue in France

Jane Jessel writes from Paris. Food is one of the few issues which can arouse the French public to solidarity: last week a call to boycott veal which has been proved to contain illegal hormones seriously disrupted the veal butchery trade, and embarrassed the government whose President shortly faces an election.

Use of added hormones — natural or artificial — to fatten calves has been banned in France for over twenty years, though veal producers have consistently ignored by the law. Recent veterinary tests led to allegations that up to 80 or 90 per cent of veal was so tainted (notably by the female hormone oestrogen); so the French Consumers' Union called for a boycott. Veal sales consequently slumped by at least 40 per cent overall, and by ninety per cent in some areas. Bad news for the trade, since the French each consume an average of seven and a half kilos a year, compared with the Italians' three kilos.

But only seven months before a Presidential election the government cannot afford to offend the huge farming lobby — to whose defence has come President Giscard's optimistic rival, Jacques Chirac, president of the Gaullist Party, Mayor of Paris and MP for the rural Correze. Agriculture minister, Pierre Mehaignerie, said last week that since the law was unobserved, perhaps it should be changed. He said he was considering permitting the use of 'natural' hormones, while continuing to ban 'artificial ones. The poisonous effects of the latter were proved, though the former 'do not seem prejudicial to health'. Walking his tightrope carefully, he called for a 'European ruling' on the issue.

The controversy has also spread from veal to beef. The National Consumers' Institute recently investigated methods of Charolais, an important beef rearing area. In spite of producers' claims of free-range naturally fed cattle, it found hormone implantation was rife. The October issue of the In-

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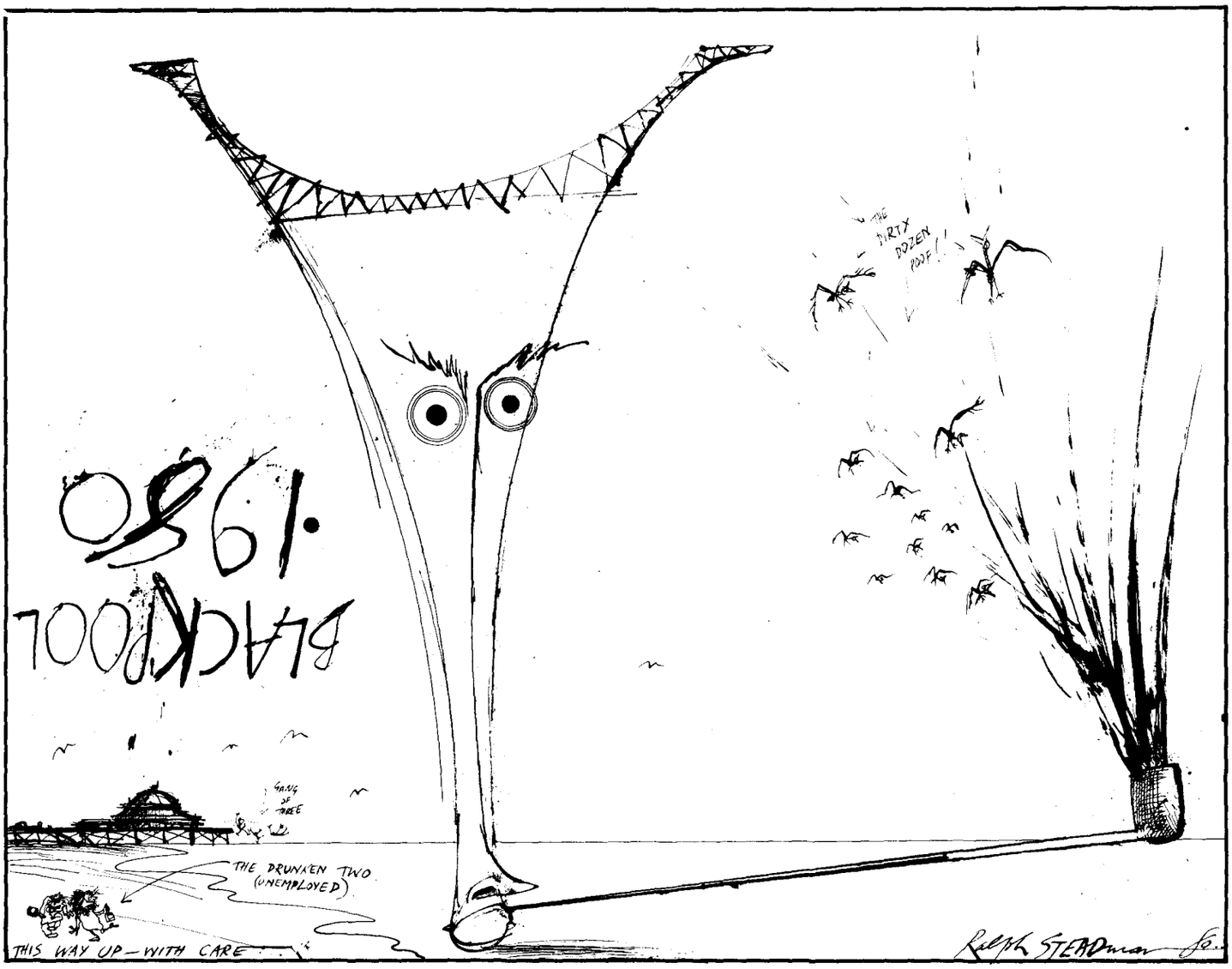
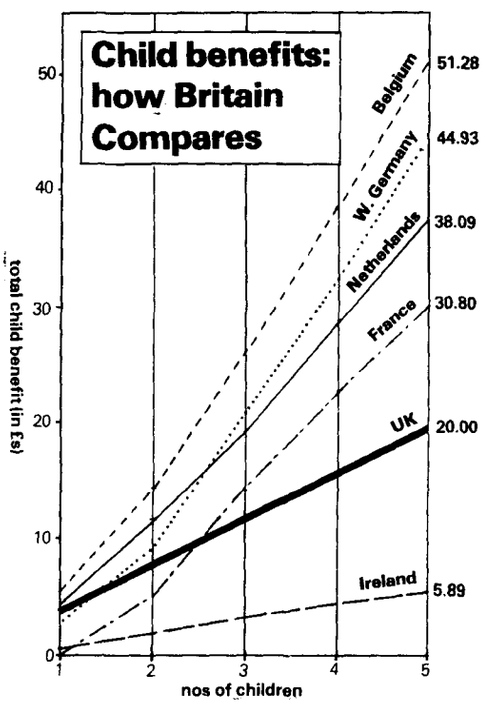


stitute's Journal, *Que choisir*? included an article calling for a beef boycott, and was printed and ready for distribution. However, following a few discreet telephone calls from the Ministry of Agriculture to the editor, it will appear a fortnight late with certain amendments made to that article's text.

John Nott and the poor

Peter Kellner writes: 'The gap between those who are in work and those who are out of work is too narrow': thus John Nott, the Trade Secretary, on TV last Sunday. He is welcome to his opinions, but the facts are these. According to last week's Supplementary Benefits Commission annual report*, the out-of-work have been losing ground steadily over the past five years compared with the in-work. In 1975 a married couple with two children living on supplementary benefits received 84.3 per cent of the income of a low-paid worker (defined as someone on the lowest decile: that is, nine-tenths of the way down the pay league). The latest figure is 79.9 per cent.

It is among large families that the supplementary benefits family can reasonably expect to live better than the low-paid working family; though for this to be true families have to be larger than they used to be: a married couple on supplementary benefit with four children were 3.1 per cent *better off* than a low-paid worker's family in 1975; they are now 3.8 per cent *worse off*. Even so, few would claim that the British have the poverty trap or family support problem licked. One solution that could, in principle, appeal both to John Nott and the left would be to follow the continental example of giving really generous non-means-tested benefits to bigger-than-average families. The chart shows how British child benefits compared with those of other European countries in mid-1979 (the latest date for which comparable information is available). Britain's flat £4 per child (rising soon to £4.75) compares with the standard continental practice of giving roughly what we give for the first one or two children, and then stepping aid up sharply for third and subsequent children: typically £12 a week each, sometimes (as in France) with extra money for babes and teenagers.



That would, of course, add to public spending — although a minor adjustment to income tax rates could minimise it; and there may be problems with people who dislike the idea of giving financial encouragement to parents to spawn large families. But the point is that if Nott feels that seriously about the poverty trap, it is perfectly possible, and not actually all that difficult, to get rid of it.

Another Poland in East Germany?

Michael Stone writes from West Berlin: The strike of between 350 and 600 railwaymen employed by the East German Railways in West Berlin may have been vaguely inspired by events in Poland, but has proved an embarrassment to all concerned. It embarrassed East Germany because it highlighted the undemocratic conditions of employment for those who run the city railway in the western half of Berlin. In addition to their pay being about a third below that of railway workers in West Germany, the strikers — who account for about a tenth of the total work force — claim that because of shortage of staff they had to work between 100 and 120 hours a month overtime. As most of them were members of the East German communist trade union (FDGB) they lacked proper union representation. Also, because the passenger service of the city railway is running up an annual deficit of about DM 140 million it has been subject to drastic cuts, resulting in peremptory dismissals.

But the West Berlin Senate is by no means happy about the course of events. It does not want to assume responsibility for the railway, on the grounds that it falls under Allied jurisdiction and because of the prohibitive costs involved in bringing it up to scratch. Nobody in West Berlin is interested in altering the present arrangement — set up by the Allies after the war. As a result West Berlin police are standing by while East German railway police, armed with axes and crowbars and, in some cases, helped by police dogs, are clearing the signal towers

*Cmnd 8033, HMSO, £6.70.

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held by the strikers.

'We are still occupied territory,' Horst Schultz, spokesman of the strike committee, said to me bitterly. After 33 years working for the East German Railways he is now facing losing his job as inspector at West Berlin's container terminal as well as forfeiting his pension rights.

'We've always been looked down on by West Berlin's populace,' he said: 'But now we can't complain about lack of support.' There is no evidence, however, that the financial help they've been receiving from workshop collections and individual contributors has been anywhere near on the scale enjoyed by the Polish dock workers during their strike. In any case, no amount of support will help the strikers as long as East German Railways refuse to enter into negotiations with them and the West Berlin Senate is scared of being left holding the unloved and unlovely baby.

What the Labour MPs said in Moscow

Christopher Hitchens writes: Norman Atkinson MP, treasurer of the Labour Party, is a very decent man. James Lamond, Labour MP for Oldham East, is a man of perfect obscurity. Both were recently received in Moscow. Both took part in discussions about the impending Madrid summit. Both were interviewed on Radio Moscow, and by *Izvestia*. Both have been the target of various Tory popinjays since their return. Mr Atkinson, at least, claims to have been misquoted. *Izvestia* is hard to check, and does not always observe the most scrupulous journalistic standards. But the BBC *Summary of World Broadcasts* is easy to check, and the relevant copy is before me.

On 12 September Moscow radio carried a long recorded interview with the two representatives of British Labour. Mr Lamond made the following statements in the course of this interview:

> 'We feel . . . that what we must do is make the point wherever we can go that the Soviet Union has no aggressive intentions towards any other country.' 'Any discussion should be of a constructive nature, not critical bickering about human rights to the exclusion of all other aspects of the Helsinki Final Act.'
> 'Well, the so-called Soviet threat plays a very prominent part in the propaganda in the West. I have never accepted that there is a threat.'

Lamond rated a second interview on his own, in which he said of Afghanistan that the Soviet intervention had been 'necessary to safeguard the revolution', and had only come about after repeated requests from something called 'the Government of Afghanistan'. 'As I have said in the House of Commons, I believe they contribute to world peace by doing so.'

The creeps of the 'Social Democratic Alliance' are always scenting heresy, and attacking Michael Foot and Eric Heffer for sharing positions with the Communist Party. But Lamond has actually gone further than the CP will go — and even recently graced a platform of the New Communist Party, the pathetic pro-Soviet sect which broke away over the issue of Czechoslovakia.

Norman Atkinson did not dissociate himself from Lamond's use of the socialist 'we' in the first interview, and has not disowned his colleague's opinions since. His personal contribution to the interview consisted of some pro-detente banalities and some praise for a hitherto unknown phenomenon called the 'peace movement' in the Soviet Union. He claims to have been misquoted by *Izvestia* on his attitude to Russian military intentions, and complains that the British press uses 'twisted' methods. Has it occurred to him, on his loquacious voyages abroad, that the Russian press might do the same?

Duncan Campbell
& Rob Edwards

Square leg caught out

THIS WEEK'S Home Office civil defence exercise has revealed immense deficiencies in civil, as opposed to military, preparedness. In Scotland, one local authority has refused to participate at all.

For the first time ever, the Home Office and local authorities have shown the press *en masse* around some of their protected bunkers for wartime control. This week's tours included Sub Regional Headquarters No 62, in the Basingstoke area, and a London Sector control in the Wanstead area. (Readers may recall a more exact description of these two centres in last week's *New Statesman*; however, this week's tours were conditional on agreeing to pretend that the exact locations are an official secret.

At Basingstoke, a two story structure bunker, partially underground, was constructed underneath an office block built in 1970. SRHQ62 would be responsible for administering Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire and the Isle of Wight. Roughly 200 staff drawn from the military services and most government departments would co-ordinate whatever remained in these five counties, under the control of a Sub Regional Commissioner, said to be a junior minister of the day.

The Basingstoke bunker tour presented a sorry picture of a system in extreme dilapidation, with only military facilities really operating effectively. Basingstoke, like many other bunkers, leaks badly (water, not secrets). In one of the male dormitories, dripping water had created stalactites more than an inch long on the ceiling. After an attack, these protruberances would no doubt glow in the dark. One official noted gloomily that the stalactites had enjoyed six years unimpeded growth, as the government department using offices above wouldn't let their car park be dug up to repair the mess.

Two doors away, the radio room, containing emergency standby links to the outside world, was quite large. The equipment which had been fitted there was rescued from near terminal dampness eighteen months ago, and landlines were cut; it would have no communications at all.

Most of the centre was empty, with only the Sub-Region's Military Advisory Team operating with two or three token civilians in attendance. In the ten years since SRHQ62 was built, the civil staff designated to run the place in war have never been there. It has been activated just once or twice before, both times for military exercises. With the exception of the top few civil servants who will run the place, none of the people 'earmarked' to serve in SRHQ62 know that they're among the lucky ones with reserved bunker places. Nor have they received any training for their wartime jobs. Since no protected accommodation is provided for families or dependents, there is some considerable doubt as to whether any of them would turn up anyway. The impression of disarray extended throughout the bunker. No food in store, and the canteen was only running by courtesy of visiting army cooks.

Much of the rest of the Sub Regional HQ network was in the same state as Basingstoke — or worse — according to officials. In fact, despite press notices announcing that SRHQs in all 17 sub regions had been going for *Square Leg*, there are in fact only 14 SRHQs now built. Two new SRHQs have had their sites selected, and one may start construction soon. There is no hope of the third, covering North Wales, being built as yet. Where no SRHQ exists, the civil and military staffs are working from above-ground offices which have to serve in lieu of bunkers.

Of the remaining 14 SRHQs, at least one — SRHQ101 below the tax office and courts in Southport, Lancs — is more or less flooded. Others are disturbingly humid.

Even if Basingstoke's radio communications were working, they would probably have been put out of action by the Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP) resulting from nuclear explosions. An RAF officer commented that 'no one is sure of the effects of EMP'.

In charge of the military team at Basingstoke was a Brigadier, whose name was an official secret. He was on the staff of No 4 Region Armed Forces HQ, which has peacetime headquarters at Aldershot, and its own substantial bunker — 'AFHQ4' — elsewhere. He was sharing command of the Basingstoke bunker, for the purpose of the *Square Leg* exercise, with a senior civil servant, whose name and ministry were also official secrets.

Home Office Minister Leon Brittan indicates the devastation that was London

The Brigadier fielded various press googlies on what the army would be doing to control survivors. Asked if he would put through orders for looters to be shot, he noted 'I wouldn't underestimate the difficulty of making a decision of that kind. If action amounting to shooting was desirable, I believe the military would have to do that if it was the only logical course.' On the rounding up of 'subversives' amongst the population, he agreed that the Commissioners might 'ask me to deal with difficult chaps. . . to round (them) up and put them away'. He did not dispute suggestions that the 'putting them away' might be done with bullets.

An even more curious spectacle of half-hearted 'openness' was presented at a press conference held in the London sector bunker at Wanstead. Home Office Minister Leon Brittan paused from his tour of bunkers for a press conference during which he refused to provide any specific details about how many bombs had fallen, or where, or the scale of casualties during the exercise. Behind him as he spoke, a six-foot high wall chart of London showed clearly that hydrogen bombs had landed on Heathrow Airport, Croydon, Potters Bar, Ongar and the Thames estuary. A second map (see picture) showed that London had been demolished save for a few east and east-central postal districts.

In Scotland the Lothian Regional Council in Edinburgh decided to bar the participation of their staff in *Square Leg*. The ruling Labour groups, which ordered the ban last Thursday before the imaginary bombs fell, issued a statement opposing the exercise as a dangerous war preparation increasing the likelihood of war.

An enraged group of three Tory councillors contested the move, and successfully got a ruling from Lord Ross in the Court of Session — prohibiting the Labour group from giving the banning order without a policy discussion in Regional council or committee. The move was futile; Lothian Chief Executive and local controller Robert Peggie had already declined the Scottish Office invitation to participate, and left for the weekend. As a result, the Region's two emergency officers planning and some twenty staff were removed from the exercise.

The game plan scenario was as grim as the Labour group might have anticipated: 3 bombs fell in the Rosyth dockyard area just north of Edinburgh, and 40 per cent of the local population were deemed killed or severely injured. Scottish civil and military officials were playing out the rest of the exercise from the Scottish Central Control bunker at Kirknewton, just a few miles west of Edinburgh It was impossible to say whether this refuge was as damp and empty and unready as those in the south.

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PRESS
Patrick Wintour

How newspaper proprietors aim to beat strikers

The table talk of Mr Pole-Carew

THE NEW STATESMAN has obtained documents showing the remarkable adversary attitude among senior managers in the newspaper industry. They show a manager prepared to 'bribe staff to secure loyalty', to 'humiliate union officials', to manipulate the police and to 'institute a two week reign of terror against returning strikers.'

The documents are the notes of a talk given by Mr Christopher Pole-Carew, managing director of the *Nottingham Evening Post* to a group of executives of Portsmouth and Sunderland Newspapers. The meeting was held on 24 January 1979 and was attended by ten senior management figures from P&S, including three of its directors and the company's chairman Sir Richard Storey, who had invited Carew to give the talk. The notes were taken by Mr O.A. Robinson, an NUJ member, who led P&S's enquiry into introducing new technology.

Referring to his defeat of the NGA over the introduction of new technology in 1973 and 'the two week reign of terror' which followed it Mr Pole-Carew said:

> we did everything to impress on the unions that we were the victors. We were thoroughly unpleasant to those who had been on strike at the time. For example if a returning striker had swept a floor, the overseer sprinkled dirt all over it again and made the man sweep it clean a second time.

Much of Pole-Carew's talk was about the tactics needed to win a strike over new technology — P&S are urgently considering the introduction of direct in-put into computer terminals by journalists, wiping out the NGA jobs. A document, also in our possession, about the 'producing of a paper against union opposition' has been circulated among P&S management.

Pole-Carew's advice on strike breaking is astonishingly frank:

> If you are going to fight a battle you have to have loyal troops. We bribed people to stay in during the stike. The strikers received strike pay from the NGA. We improved on this by giving those who remained loyal £30 to £40 per week extra for the duration of the strike. Money is a weapon — a very potent weapon — and it should be used.

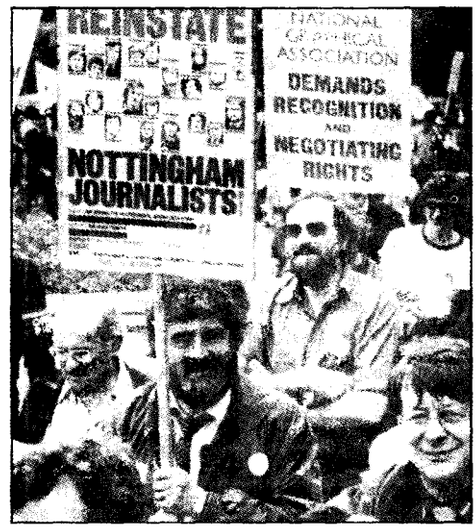
When we spoke to Mr Pole-Carew this week he admitted to having given a talk to the P&S management in January 1979 but said that it mainly concerned the issue of new technology. However his letter accepting Sir Richard Storey's invitation to speak says:

> I have always felt so strongly that the only hope for our industry is for individuals to take firm stands in order to regain control of their own management decisions and anything I can do in this direction I believe in the interests of our industry.

He explained in his talk one way he believed this could be done:

> I have always tried to drive a wedge between union officials and their members. I have always done my best to humiliate and discredit union officials. If a union official comes to see me I will make certain he stands through our discussions. I always meet union officials on neutral premises and out of office hours. If I have a meeting with union officials I do my best to make it continue after they have missed the last bus or train.

When we put this report to Mr Pole-Carew he refused to validate the accuracy of notes of a talk which he can no longer recollect



in detail (we have satisfied ourselves of the authenticity of the document) but he was convinced that he did not express such sentiments. He says he has met only two union officials in the last eight years — a remarkable record since he sacked 350 NGA members in 1973 and 28 journalists in 1979 after the NUJ provincial journalists strike. Sir Richard Storey said any notes would only be 'transcripts of jottings' taken at the talk, but Mr. Robinson who took the notes is an experienced minute taker.

ACCORDING TO these 'jottings' Pole-Carew recounted how he had rewarded a private contractor for his support and outlined a 'ruse to stop union officials from trailing newsprint vehicles': have two heavy lorries following the vehicle and sandwich the union men's car between them. Regard suppliers who refuse to supply during a strike as enemies and never do business with them again. 'There is no question of being friends again with someone who has been an enemy. In no way do we forgive.'

Spotting potential enemies appears to be a major part of management activity in Pole-Carew's company, as the notes of that part of his talk dealing with vetting new employees reveals. All staff are said to go through at least three and normally five interviews. 'The primary question is: Is this person a security risk?' Even the doctor giving the medical check-up 'chats them up and reports back on whether he considers them security risks. Then there is a probation period during which they are needled to find out whether they are security risks.'

Those who do not strike are paid more afterwards than those who struck. Relations of contract drivers who worked during the strike were found jobs. He explained how to discourage membership of the NUJ: 'no union official would be given a senior editorial post.

Dealing with his own experience of strikes, Pole-Carew explained how he used his paper to put his case, publishing the strikers wages.

> The public go off strikers when they know what they earn. Publishing earnings played havoc with strikers.

Picketing did not prove to be a problem:

> We are 200 yards from the police headquarters. . . . NGA threatened to have 1000 pickets around the premises. The police did not think they would be able to raise 1000 . . . because the university students who make up rentapicket crowds were on holiday. What I did was imply to the police that they might have to prevent our loyal staff from assulting the pickets: if the pickets came on our premises they might be attacked by our loyal staff. Therefore can you keep the pickets off our premises. This is precisely what the police did. In effect we forced the police to become involved.

The most effective industrial action, he said, would be to picket the chairman's house and 'allocate 40 people to continually phone the news centre to jam the telephone lines.' But even if things escalated Pole-Carew, last year's high sherriff of Nottingham was ready. He is quoted as saying:

> The unions are clever at picketing those who will succumb easily to threats. We told the unions that when the first brick went through the window of the home of a loyal member of staff we would retaliate with a petrol bomb through the window of a union officials home.

When we spoke to him, Mr Pole-Carew denied having said anything of the sort — 'for one thing it would be illegal.'

WE DO NOT KNOW how seriously the P&S executives took Mr Pole-Carew's advice — or even if they believed his tales — but by 9 April another document for circulation was in the Chairman's office on 'producing a newspaper against union opposition.' This paper concentrated mainly on ways of acquiring a semi-skilled blackleg labour force able to produce a paper during a strike. It was suggested that management and secretaries should be trained in the use of printing machinery while machine parts spares should be bought before a strike to prevent effective sabotage, Using the 'justification of bomb scares' the company could introduce security checks and passes to loyal staff during normal times to ensure the building was secure in the event of a strike.

Since this memo was circulated the Portsmouth and Sunderland group has partly circumvented an NGA strike by using helicopters to get copies of the paper over the picket lines. And following the strike which cost them £500,000 they warned all FOCs at Portsmouth that there would be immediate sackings in the event of any further breaches of contract, selected 'loyal' journalists are now being paid special rates and NUJ chapel meetings are now banned in office hours.

The justification for this approach to industrial relations is the need to reasert the management's right to manage. Furthermore, it is frequently assumed that it is necessary to keep the companies in good financial shape. But the fact is that Portsmouth and Sunderland Newspapers — with three evening paper monopolies under its control is astonishingly profitable. Pre-tax profits of £4 million represents a 20 per cent return on sales and a 40 per cent return on capital employed — way ahead of the industry average. Of total funds available, £9½ million in the last two years, less than £2 million has been invested in new assets. Finally, the right to manage of Sir Richard Storey Bart — whose shareholding in the company is worth £2 million — derives from the lucky fact that his father and his grandfather ran the company before him.

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THE GULF
Fred Halliday

Iran pushed into a war it would like to avoid

A threat to Khomeini's regime

THE CONFLICT between Iraq and Iran is not primarily about territory or waterways. It is about the survival of the two regimes, both of which have a reason for wanting to overthrow the other, and to assert their foreign policies in the Gulf region. Like all revolutions, the Iranian one has been both nationalist and internationalist: nationalist in its assertion of the claims of Persians over Arabs, Kurds and Turks; internationalist in its claim to represent a universal ideal in the name of which tyrants and blasphemers abroad will be swept away. For their part the Iraqis are intent on teaching the Iranians a lesson for having tried to interfere in Iraqi politics, and on establishing themselves as the dominant state in the affairs of the region.

The territorial issues are subservient to this. The Shatt al-Arab river, which runs from the junction of the Tigris and the Euphrates (at the point traditionally held to have been the Garden of Eden), is wide enough to allow each to conduct its trade without interference from the other. The small amount of land in the Kurdish mountains which Iraq has now 'liberated' from Iran is of no special significance, and the Iraqis were quite happy to let the issue lie dormant in the Shah's time. The three islands near the mouth of the Persian Gulf seized by Iran in 1971 were never part of Iraq anyway and it is improbable that with their tiny navy the Iraqis would ever be able to attempt a serious assault upon them.

For some months Iran has been calling for an Islamic revolution in Iraq, and it has armed members of the underground Shiite group *al-Da'awah* who have been claiming intensified activities over the past two weeks. Other issues play their part. The fighting in Iranian Kurdistan, along the border with Iraq, has raised tension there, and on 18 September Iranian forces attacked the last Kurdish-held town, Mahabad, in a continuation of the year-long attempt to crush the Kurdish resistance. Although he spent thirteen years in Iraq as an exile from the Shah's rule, Ayatollah Khomeini has no love for the Iraqis who expelled him unceremoniously in October 1978 when the Shah threatened them with a new insurrection in their own Kurdish areas.

The Iranians have made the mistake of picking a fight with a regime that is not noted for meekness. The campaign against Iraq does not appear to have been one that was intended to lead to war, but the absence of a clear-cut policy in Tehran itself, and the internal political pressure to engage in international combats, have combined to push Iran into a war that wiser elements might have sought to avoid.

The Iraqis see their own interests as directly threatened by Iran. Most directly, the half of their own population who are Shiite Muslims and who have traditionally felt excluded from power cannot be allowed to organise and follow Khomeini's exhortations. The evidence does not suggest a mass active opposition in recent months and the Iraqi government has not tolerated the independent religious and bazaar institutions in its cities which played such a major organisational role in the Iranian revolution. But to prevent any spread of *al-Da'awah*'s activities, and to demonstrate resolve in the eyes of their own people, the Iraqis felt compelled to respond.

THE IRAQIS HAVE also become involved in the internal politics of Iran: while repeating, even in the last few days, that they do not want to take the southern Khuzistan province of Iran away, they have supported the movement by the local Arabs there for autonomy. At the same time, Iraq has become a haven for Iranian exiles who have training camps and radio stations there. The Iranian Kurds have so far avoided involvement with Iraq and, caught in the middle as they are, they have tried to stress their independence from Iraqi connections.

The long-run aim of the Baghdad government must be to remove the Khomeini regime in Iran altogether. Yet it is doubtful if this can be accomplished by outright invasion since the Iraqi armed forces are not capable of doing this. A military defeat for Iran, combined with serious damage to Iran's oil industry, would, however, contribute to producing a crisis there. It could hasten the end of the Islamic regime and then provide a context in which Iraq could help Khomeini's opponents to come to power.

Iraq is also keen to use its conflict to fulfil two other foreign policy aims. One is to assert its dominance of the Persian Gulf, as the active leader of the Arab states there, and as the force which put a stop to Iranian revolutionary expansion. The escalation of the conflict in recent weeks has provided an opportunity for Iraq to reverse the previous pattern of apparent Persian domination, and the desire to control the whole of the Shatt al-Arab river is a symbolic part of this re-assertion. Iraq's second foreign policy aim is directed at the Arab world as a whole: Iraqi President Saddar Hussein sees himself as the new Nasser. Posters in the streets of Baghdad proclaim it to be the *qala'a* or citadel of the Arab revolution, and a clear victory over Iran would strengthen the Iraqi claim to be the new leaders of the Arab nation. The message of such a triumph would be clear enough: while Sadat negotiates with Israel, and the monarchs of the Peninsula cleave to the West, Iraq is asserting the interests of Arab independence.

Despite its militantly nationalist tone, however, the Iraqi campaign against Iran has a certain if ill-defined connection with the desires of others, in Egypt and the West, to undermine and eventually replace the Khomeini government. While OPEC production as a whole has fallen this year, Iraqi oil production rose 6.6 per cent in the first half of 1980, compared to the same figure in 1979, and this is generally held to reflect an Iraqi desire to prevent the Iranians from selling their over-priced crude. At the same time the fact that Iraq gives haven to those most likely to re-establish Iran's links with the West means that a de facto collaboration between Washington and Baghdad exists. Iraq does not have diplomatic relations with the USA, because of American support for Israel, but there is considerable trade between the two countries and the convergence in foreign policy issues has grown in recent months.

The Americans must be worried that a protracted Iranian-Iraqi conflict would affect the whole of the Gulf and in particular the oilfields of eastern Saudi Arabia. Not only are these vulnerable to Iranian attack, but they are also the area where a large number of rebellious Saudi Shiite Muslims live. On the other hand, the Americans may also be calculating that the Khomeini government in Iran may not now survive for more than a year or two, and that a disastrous war plus economic problems will hasten the day when more sympathetic forces come to power. Assuming the hostages issue is solved, a scenario over the coming months could be for the Iranian economy to be so weakened that the financial bases of the regime were destroyed and popular discontent grew. An Iraqi disruption of Iran's oilfields and refinery, combined with a covert campaign to prevent Iran importing the paraffin so widely used in cooking and heating, would do much to hasten such a situation.

IN THE SHORT RUN there is little that the Americans can do to influence events. Nor is the Soviet Union in a more favourable diplomatic situation. Its relations with Iraq have deteriorated since 1978, when the Iraqi Baathists imprisoned dozens of communists, and were soured further by Baghdad's attack on the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. Relations with Iran have also been bad, both because of Afghanistan and because of Iranian hostility towards the Soviet Union's past arms supplies to Baghdad. Soviet press coverage of the Iranian-Iraqi issues has been relatively even-handed in recent weeks with a slight tilt to Iran compared to previous reports.

What might alter Soviet policy would, however, be a clear sign that the Iraqis were planning to topple the Khomeini government altogether. They would also become more active if an Iranian threat to the Saudi regime appeared likely to bring in American forces. In both such cases the Russians would be expected to give greater emphasis to the need for a quick end to the fighting. Certainly the war contains its dangers for Soviet policy: it may strengthen the co-ordination of Iraqi and western policies, and it may hasten the replacement of the Islamic regime in Iran by a more pro-western one.

In the meantime, the initiative remains with the countries in the region. Iran can be expected to defend its territory and to persist in its call for an Islamic permanent revolution. The Iraqis will try to fulfil their three immediate aims of asserting their territorial claims, inflicting a signal punishment upon Iran, and demonstrating their prowess to the other Arab states. In the longer-run, however, each regime seems bound to work for the replacement of the other.

This is an area of the world where memories die especially hard. The Iraqis have been spending millions of dollars in recent months making an epic film of the battle of Qadissiya, when in 637 AD the armies of Islam defeated the last Persian king. The Iranians enact each year the battle of Kerbala when, a few years later, the Shiite Muslim founder Ali was slain by the tyrant Yazid. If the events of the past few days are anything to go by, it will take a long time before the consequences of these newer tumults are themselves played out.

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Prudential profile No. 3: Kenneth Fleet Reporting

John Powell, Head of Prudential Management Services shows Kenneth Fleet, leading financial journalist and City Editor of the Sunday Express, some of the hardware behind the Prudential's "computer revolution".

"Computers mean even better service for 8 million Prudential policyholders."

John Powell, Assistant General Manager, Management Services

Kenneth Fleet talks to John Powell at the centre of the Prudential "computer revolution".

Fleet: The Prudential, I understand, was a pioneer in processing data by machine.

Powell: This company was a leader in the computer revolution. We installed our first computer in 1961. The first punch card machine was installed in 1919.

Fleet: What does computerisation actually do for the Pru's eight million policyholders?

Powell: It buys them a better deal for their premiums. With costs always rising, we need to spend as little as possible of policyholders' premiums on administration. Computers also help speed up the payment of our policyholders' claims and answering queries.

Fleet: Will that unique character, "The Man from the Pru," your 13,000 field staff, learn to love the computer?

Powell: Computers are becoming cheaper and smaller all the time. I foresee a time when we shall bring many of these advantages to our selling staff.

Fleet: Are there also benefits for head office staff?

Powell: They have to deal with a frightening amount of paper work. Computers help significantly to cut wastage in materials and manhours, and increase job interest. I am looking forward to the time when Prudential offices will be using computers as a huge filing system and communications network. We can and should use the computer's capabilities to improve job interest, while continuing to improve our efficiency.

Fleet: Senior managers sometimes see computers as expensive toys. Is this true with you?

Powell: No. Computers are a serious business and not a game. They are vital to management in decision-making and they provide the opportunity to look at the future of our business.

Fleet: What has this massive transplant of computer technology cost?

Powell: The Prudential has invested £20 millions in the computer centre and we are currently spending close to £10 millions a year on computer activities.

Fleet: What other plans have you?

Powell: We have just installed a new, large processor which will make it possible for many Prudential staff to have access to a computer and write their own computer programs. We are also developing on-line systems to give branch offices instant computer facilities.

Fleet: Is the faceless computer about to take the place of the friendly face of the Man from the Pru?

Powell: Over my dead body.

The Prudential's annual report is available from the Publicity Department, Prudential Assurance Company Ltd., 142 Holborn Bars, London EC1N 2NH.

Prudential

You don't know the half of it.

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Labour and the power illusion

Can Labour politicians ever be effective? BRUCE PAGE on the Castle diaries and other texts.

THE FACT that the Labour Party is in deep trouble does not prove that its historical day is done. Its recent record has been one of substantial failure — in terms, at least, of the honourable aspirations set-up — and troublesome dissension must precede regeneration. Equally, though, the bustling activity of conference demonstrates nothing about the real vitality of the party, for political organisations commonly maintain an outward existence long after they have gone irremediably aground on the mudflats of time. Last year, when the *New Statesman* analysed them in detail, indications were not good. This year, in real terms, they are a fraction worse. Membership has shown no anti-Thatcherite surge; financial chaos remains largely unchallenged; the number of paid agents has declined again; and there is still no reason to think that the long-term decline of Labour's voting strength has been reversed. There is, to be sure, an opinion-poll lead over Mrs Thatcher's highly-implausible government, but Peter Kellner's analysis opposite shows how little comfort should be extracted from that.

It is, in short, plausible to suggest that Labour may not be able to regain its role as a broad political movement capable of effecting substantial modification in the British status quo — which, given the condition of that article, must spread disquiet among folk who are far from being socialists.

Naturally, this is taken by some people as demonstrating the requirement for a revolutionary politics, by others as showing the need for a new synthesis of pressure-groups, and by others as justification for a Centre Party. All of these arguments may require intelligent confrontation. But Blackpool is rather the occasion for trying to discover whether Labour's trajectory is now such as to make that business urgent. For anyone like myself, who never imagined that recovery from the 1964-66 debacle could be other than painful, halting and uncertain of accomplishment — to whom none of the intervening, much-advertised sunrises have appeared impressive — it remains difficult to predict the next kink in the

trend. Labour has, at last, inevitably, approached the point at which modern English institutions become capable of reformation: it stands, that is, on the brink of the precipice. But as we know, there is a tendency for some of them to misjudge the decisiveness of such a moment, and to go right on over the edge.

WHAT WE HAVE this autumn is a mass of new evidence about the nature of the party, about what happened during its last period in office, and about the ideas that some of its leaders have for improvement during the next few years. We have policy statements from Peter Shore and (in multiplicate) from David Owen. We have *Tony Benn: A Political Biography:* we have Hugh Jenkins on the rank-and-file of his own constituency party (assumed typical); we have Gerald Kaufman explaining what experience taught him about *How To Be A Minister;* we can glean something (so its author says) from the text accompanying Denis Healey's photographic collection; useful cross-bearings can be found in David Steel's account of the Lib-Lab pact, *A House Divided;* and above all we have Barbara Castle's diaries for 1974-76, which are likely to eclipse Richard Crossman's diaries as a document on British government, democratic socialism, and the loveless union between the two.*

It's been argued in the *New Statesman* that Labour's electoral difficulties arise more immediately from suspicion over the party's effectiveness than from the ideological hostility of a conservative people — serious factor though that must be. Comparative readings among some of these texts provide ample evidence to justify such a view, and such suspicions. For instance, Barbara Castle records that the proposal for Planning Agreements between government and industry was one of the central notions in the manifesto which the National Executive Committee (NEC) devised for the 1974 election. 'The greatest thing since Keynes' is her account of the impression that Harold Wilson gave to the 1974 Labour Conference. They were a designedly controversial item, and her diaries show them attracting much high-level discussion during the following 19 months.

On 10 May 1974 they came up at a Cabinet/TUC Liaison Committee meeting, by way of a paper from Tony Benn, Secretary of State for Industry, suggesting that they would cover 'initially' about 100 firms — controlling about half of manufacturing output — and that government aid would be increasingly channelled through them. On 15 July, in Cabinet, Chancellor Denis Healey is recorded saying 'we should not be thinking in terms of the biggest hundred firms, but rather of the sectors most urgently requiring attention — e.g. engineering rather than tobacco. We should also go for co-operation rather than sanctions.'

On 31 July the Cabinet Committee on Industrial Development had a stormy old session polishing up a White Paper *(The Regeneration of British Industry* — remember? — August 1974) with much 'esoteric discussion' of its references to planning agreements. Tony Benn, disclaimed having had any desire for statutory agreements, but pleaded that 'some leverage' would be required to gain corporate participation (no-one, apparently, had the slightest intention of trying to gain union participation). The final document said nothing about numbers of companies: merely that the government's approach would be 'selective', and that while companies wouldn't lose any aid from not signing planning agreements, those that did sign them might gain some aid.

On 2 August there were nasty scenes in Cabinet, when Benn — unsupported by the left — tried once more to get his colleagues to give him some 'leverage' in the legislation which would affect planning agreements. Not to do so, he said, would be to make a 'major change in the party's policy'. This led to Harold Wilson's producing furious denials that he had ever suggested payment of aid might be conditional upon acceptance of planning agreements. Apparently he sent for the record of his Party conference speeches in order to demonstrate this point.

TOUGH SLEDDING. The issue, however, doesn't re-surface in Mrs Castle's account —

Continued on page 26

Tony Benn: A Political Biography, by Robert Jenkins. Writers & Readers, £6.95.
Rank & File by Hugh Jenkins. Croom Helm £9.95.
How To Be A Minister, by Gerald Kaufman. Sidgwick & Jackson, £7.95.
A House Divided, by David Steel. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £6.50.
The Castle Diaries, 1974-76, by Barbara Castle. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £14.95.

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Peter Kellner, Political Editor

Socialism, polls & Monty Python

THIS WEEKEND, as Labour Party delegates arrive in Blackpool for this year's annual conference, at least two opinion polls will be published on what Labour supporters think of the party, its leaders and its policies. Three predictions may safely be made. The first is that the polls will show scant support for either the policies or the personalities of the left. The second is that the left will cry foul, rubbish, polls feed Fleet Street's conspiracy against socialism, my general management committee knows more about public opinion than the polls do. The third safe bet is that the right will say, there, told you so, Labour voters would hate left-wing policies, and would turf us out if we tried them.

Consequently, the poll results will be consigned to a corner of the political battlefield as an ingredient for the custard pies that each side ritually throws at the other, instead of being used as serious evidence in what should be an important debate about Labour and its public.

In between, as ever, lies Mr Callaghan. He draws eclectically on the arrogant mistakes of both sides. Shortly before the Scottish devolution referendum last year he was questioned on television about a poll suggesting (rightly, it turned out) that devolution would fail to achieve the 40 per cent support of the whole electorate that was needed. Jim replied that he paid no attention to such findings. A few minutes later he was asked about the demands for full Scottish independence. Jim's retort was vehement: everyone knew that the polls showed that only 20 per cent of the Scots wanted independence.

Callaghan's mistake with the polls was the same that a drunken man is prone to make on approaching a lampost: to use it for support rather than illumination. The issue is, or should be: what scene do the polls actually illuminate, and do either the left or right want to look?

LET US start with the present state of the parties. Labour's lead over the Conservatives has stabilised in recent weeks at about ten per cent, a useful improvement on the early summer months when the lead hovered between two and five per cent. The improvement coincides exactly with the sharp rise in unemployment, which has now overtaken inflation as the dominant government problem in voters' minds.

It is tempting to develop a degree of political euphoria over the Government's economic disasters; while no Labour leader would be rash enough to say on television that he actually hopes unemployment will career beyond three million, it would — just between you and me — be electorally convenient, wouldn't it?

I am not so sure. Both Edward Heath and Margaret Thatcher came to power in early summer elections. Next week's Labour party conference, therefore, takes place at the equivalent stage in the life of this Tory government as the 1971 conference in the last one. The table compares the main political indicators now and then; the news is not encouraging for Labour.

For a start, Labour's lead, according to Gallup, was twice as high in September 1971 as it is today. In that month, as during much of 1971, Labour had more than 50 per cent of public support among people who indicated some party allegiance. Labour has not reached 50 per cent at any point since Thatcher came to power. Equally, Callaghan's standing throughout this year has lagged behind Harold Wilson's standing throughout 1971.

The Tories are doing better this time

	Sept '71	Sept '80
Voting intention (%, excluding don't knows)		
Conservative	35	35½
Labour	54	45
Liberal	8½	16½
Percentage who approve of . . .		
Government record	30	35
Prime Minister	32	37
Labour's leader	57	48
State of economy		
Inflation rate (%)	10	16
Unemployment (millions)	0.8	2.0

Source: Gallup Polls; Department of Employment

It is true that only 35 per cent of the public approve of the Tory government's record; yet the striking thing is that this has been a fairly constant figure since last year's election: it has *not* taken a nosedive as the dole queues have lengthened, even though Labour's lead on the voting intention has widened slightly. And so far, approval of the Thatcher government's record has consistently outpaced approval of Heath's at the equivalent time.

It is difficult to imagine the Tories actually recovering support as the recession weakens. Yet the next election is probably at least three years away; the rapid growth of North Sea oil tax revenues will let the Tories cut income taxes; so who can say that they will be unable to reverse a ten point deficit against a Labour opposition that, according to the polls, has failed to seize the imagination of the public?

IF YOU DON'T believe the polls, of course, it is all a lot easier. Such uncomfortable comparisons with the past can be ignored. After all, what's the point of asking people how they would vote if there were an election tomorrow: there isn't going to be one? Quite so: but the particular value of the main Gallup (and more recently MORI) political questions is that by asking the same ones on a regular basis, it is possible to track trends through time. Whatever defects these questions have, they are at least *constant* defects, and do not invalidate comparisons between one date and another.

The trick is to distinguish between those polls that provide useful information and those that do not. Last week a MORI poll received widespread publicity for showing that a four-to-one majority opposed Prince Charles and Princess Anne going fox-hunting. It would be nice to think that this represents a considered, strongly-held revulsion against such indulgent cruelty: nice, but absurd. There is no evidence that any except a small minority give more than two minutes thought a year to the subject. Findings on low-salience issues like fox-hunting (or this week's Gallup Pool in *New Society* on nuclear defence) should not be ignored: but they should be read with caution — a caution that the media, in reporting MORI's poll, largely cast away.

Daniel Yankelovitch, a leading American pollster, recently wrote:

> On almost every key public issue there is a process, part deliberate and part intuitive, by which people eventually settle their views. Any single opinion poll will catch . . . public, as in a snapshot, at a fixed point in the process. But which point is it? Percentages alone do not reveal whether people are at the vague beginning, the turbulent middle or the conclusive end of the process of making up their minds.

Yankelovitch's warning applies particularly to hypothetical questions. 'Voters back Centre Party plan' ran an Evening Standard headline over a MORI poll two months ago reporting that 30 per cent of its sample said they would be 'very likely' or 'fairly likely' to vote for a Centre Party. But, as MORI's own Robert Worcester admits, that is extremely unlikely to happen in practice: the 30 per cent covered a range of idealised visions of each voter's perfect party. The real thing, containing real people and choosing real policies, would be bound to disappoint a fair number of the customers. Would it contain Edward Heath or not? Shirley Williams? Roy Jenkins? Would it be for or against a statutory incomes policy? The Common Market? More defence spending? And when you find out, Ms Clapham omnibus passenger, will you still be so keen?

The opposite of an idealised hypothesis is a demonised one. Polls often report that Labour supporters dislike the idea of socialist policies, from abolishing grammar schools to extending public ownership. As a static picture of how voters think now, polls are tolerably accurate. As predictors of future political dynamics they are less so. What they demonstrate is a widespread fear that socialist policies will fail. Polls show how high are the hurdles that have to be overcome. Polls do *not* prove that the hurdles *cannot* be overcome.

The problem, of course, is to overcome the hurdles when you are dealing with prospectuses of the future. You cannot test-market socialism, as you can with consumer products, in a couple of TV regions to show how it works before trying it nationwide. It would be rather like the BBC trying to whip up public support for the Goon Show or Monty Python *before* they were first broadcast. (Q. Would you enjoy a TV comedy programme that featured transvestites, dead parrots, a Ministry of Silly Walks, and references to Jean-Paul Sartre?)

The proper use of polls, then, is neither to ignore them or to let them determine policy, but to regard them as helpful maps of the state of public opinion in charting the route to your chosen objective. But that implies you want to know what public opinion is in the first place. Which isn't certain. But that's another story.

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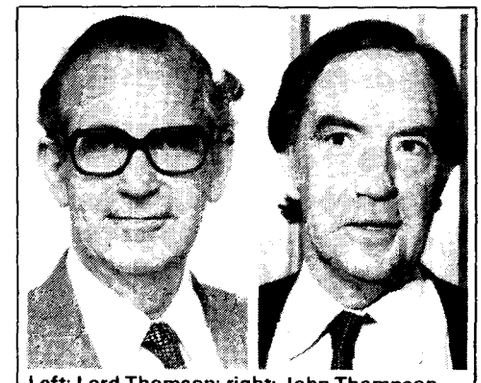
The great consultative charade

Once every six weeks the Independent Broadcasting Authority issues another licence to print money to a company which wants to operate a local radio station. Shortly the even more valuable licences to run commercial television stations will be doled out. The IBA carries out its contract award function in total secrecy except for its system of public meetings, which are called before a franchise is awarded for any particular area. JONATHAN COE has recorded recent meetings in Bristol, Luton, Bedford and Ayr, providing a fascinating insight into the Authority's manner and style of administration in one of its most important functions — the assessment of public attitudes on the parcelling up of public property — broadcasting frequencies — and their handing over to commercial interests. As he reports below the Authority often appears contradictory, aimless, incoherent, ill-informed and misleading in its public pronouncements. The public will have an opportunity to observe the IBA at close quarters in a new series of forthcoming meetings prior to the awarding of further radio, and also television franchises. Additional research by Eveline Hunter.



Left: Lord Thomson; right: John Thompson

THE LAW REQUIRES the Independent Broadcasting Authority to hold public meetings 'if it thinks fit' so that it has some idea of what the public thinks before it awards a commercial broadcasting franchise. In the case of radio, there is usually only one such meeting in any locality. These meetings have no agenda, no formal procedures, and vary in form from area to area. Sometimes admission is by ticket (at Coventry); at other times meetings are open to all. The meetings are well attended — 400 at Bristol to 70 at Bedford. The Authority carries out quite an extensive canvass before the meeting which, on occasions, includes invitations to attend — some 350 were approached in Bristol, 250 in Ayr.

The criteria by which the IBA selects organisations to canvass is obscure. In Bristol a representative from one of the city's largest Asian youth organisations asked why his association had *not* been approached. In Ayr a woman from the Kilmarnock Flower Circle wanted to know why her organisation *had* been approached.

A prime precondition for useful public discussion and pertinent contributions is information. But the IBA is obsessed with secrecy. The information it gives out at its public meetings is shamefully rudimentary. The Authority provides three pieces of paper: the names of the people on the panel, a leaflet describing in only the most general terms the Authority's functions with a list of the present commercial radio stations and a third curious document. This is headed 'Independent Local Radio' and attempts in the vaguest terms to describe the purpose of a public meeting. In Bristol the leaflet gave an unusual insight into how the IBA saw the business of awarding a contract:

> The IBA wants to hear direct from members of the public what views they have on the needs of the area, and what local points should be noted before the contractor is chosen,

then adding, rather awkwardly,

> as with applications for a job, the contents are not published of the individual applications for an ILR contract.

It is hard to see how the awarding of a broadcasting franchise to a commercial consortium can be compared to the engagement of an employee and this particular sentence was deleted from leaflets distributed at subsequent meetings.

'The art of Braque and Picasso was part of the same great tide of modernist thought that included Einstein'

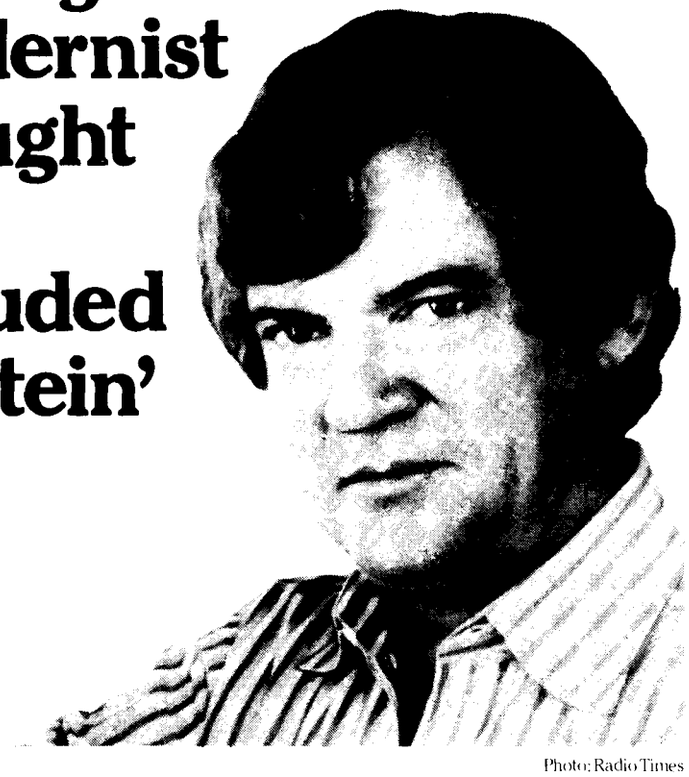


Photo: Radio Times

Robert Hughes's own written version of **The Shock of the New,** his major BBC2 series on modern art, is appearing weekly in The Listener. In the first of eight episodes, he tells how artists reacted to the coming of the machine age.

Also in this issue: Autumn Books, including Michael Foot's review of the Barbara Castle Diaries.

THE LISTENER

25 September issue. 40p

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EACH MEETING BEGINS with an Authority member reading out a roughly similar preamble. It refers in only the broadest terms to the Authority's functions, and mentions only the name of the applicant consortium. Each opening statement contains words to the effect that

> We cannot this evening discuss individual applicant groups in any depth although we do want you to make any points about radio in general in this area.

This is followed by a brief description of the complex rolling contract system the Authority claims to use to regulate the activities of the successful applicant, and announces the local advisory council (LAC) 'whose specific job is to advise the Authority about the local station and how well it is meeting the needs and tastes of local listeners.'

There are no maps of the transmission and editorial area of the station, no details about who has applied, no guide whatsoever about how the Authority makes up its mind on whom to award the contract . . . nothing in fact which would contribute to well informed and incisive discussion. It is therefore not surprising that many of the contributions at these meetings have been simple requests for information. At Bristol 57 contributions or topics were raised from the floor; roughly 30 of these were requests for information.

Things may change in future: last week Lord Thomson, chairman designate of the IBA, said that in future 'the main proposals' would be published, though the precise detail was not revealed.

At the Bristol meeting questions ranged from requests for information on finance, shareholdings, size and criteria for fixing the editorial area, nature of the IBA, programming, and the LACs. It is often impossible to distinguish between questions coming from those associated with a franchise application and those with no vested interests. The IBA lays down no obligations upon any contributor to declare any such interest. So that, for example, at Bristol a constant champion of the need for arts coverage was only later revealed as a prospective director of one of the companies applying for the franchise.

More often than not the Authority provides vague and evasive replies to questions and criticism. At Ayr a pensioner inquired innocently if the new station would be 'a bit different from Radio Clyde, which is just records and noise and silly quizzes.' He wanted to know what research the IBA did on how people listened to the radio. The chairman of this particular meeting was Lord Thomson, who turned to his director of radio John Thompson and said 'I think it might be useful to everyone if John Thompson could say something about how public taste is measured by the IBA and ILR and the methods used.' Here is the first two-thirds of his reply

> If you take the, er, until recently in the United Kingdom it's been 19 stations operating, the Authority has now got 21, 2 being very recently. But on the basis of the really quite extensive research which has been done into the number of people listening and the various age ranges and so on of listenership, on the basis of the most recent major survey I think the first point to make is that, in the areas where ILR already exists it appears to attract the highest percentage of listening of any radio channel. And then secondly, oversimplifying, by and large, there's a very real correlation between the age groups in a particular population and the type of listening which goes on to the ILR station in a locality so that, on the whole, although there is some inclination for rather more of the listening to be done by people under roughly speaking 35 than over it, this is by no means as pronounced as people tend to assume and in terms of thus, in fact, you sir, would probably find in most of the parts of the UK, here again we obviously can't speak about Ayrshire, you find that, er, at some point of the week the ILR station is providing the sort of service, the sort of output which you are likely to enjoy.
> . . .

This explanation was greeted, as one might have guessed, by total silence.

Many questions are asked about the local advisory committee. At Ayr John Thompson was asked to explain how the committees were elected: 'I think we've been using the word elected in the eighteenth century sense,' said Thompson who explained that two-thirds of this committees members will be 'selected from men, women, you know, as broad a spread as we can, but it's essentially my Scottish officer colleague, who will, I imagine be the person, who will, primarily, with much help from other sources, look round the transmission area, but it's essentially . . . appointed by the Authority and chosen by the Authority.' And to give the complete picture John Thompson should add that the local advisory committee also meets on Authority premises, in the presence of Authority officers and the Authority keeps all minutes, records and reports of the committee confidential. So confidential that the members of the public who serve on these committees are prevented from discussing publicly any of the business conducted by the committee.

At Bristol, though, Mr Thompson compared the local advisory committees to the American Senate. This remark brought

"There are no ivory towers left..."

...Somewhere in the late 1950s or early 1960s we ditched the metaphor and drew instead on the metaphors of technology," writes Liam Hudson. In a critical examination of the purpose of higher education he argues that the idea of the university as a degree or knowledge factory today is just as dead.

Also in this week's paper:

* A research council for industry?
* H. A. Turner on industrial conflict at Fords.
* Women at Oxford and Cambridge.
* Conservative, Labour, Liberal, Plaid Cymru, SNP – their plans for higher education.

Every Friday

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outraged howls of mirth from the audience and provoked one member of the public to point out that 'the Senate is at least, however imperfectly, elected by the people of the United States.' Thompson apologised but added equally mysteriously

> I think on the question of directly elected representatives, of course this comes up very frequently . . . it would be extremely difficult to set up any system which was elected, and not just representatives of small groups or pressure groups.

The Authority was also asked why it didn't hold more than one meeting; 'Well be reasonable sir,' said Mr Thompson. 'There are I think something like 400 people in this room. It is extremely expensive to set up public meetings.' In 1979 the IBA made a pre-tax surplus of over £3 million.

THERE ARE OTHER constant themes. Thirty-one of the Bristol contributions, and about half the contributions from Ayr and Bedford stressed the need for community programming in different shapes and forms: 'programmes to increase the understanding between different sections', 'to meet local needs', 'to encourage local talent', 'to encourage local bands, the local accents', 'to carry consistent, constructive and informative local news', 'to encourage people and groups to have a hand in programme making.' At Bristol eight contributors wanted ecumenical religious programmes and ones that were 'more evangelistic'. The chair ruled that ILR stations could not carry evangelistic services because they have to maintain editorial balance, which excludes those who are encouraging listeners to come to their evangelistic churches. Only one contributor, at Bristol, asked for a service of pop music like that found at other commercial stations. Yet on their record the IBA will select contractors to provide exactly this kind of service.

The IBA does not even keep a comprehensive record of the contributions made at these public meetings. The recordings made for *New Statesman* are the most complete in existence. In fact, if the government fails to produce its promised amendment to the Broadcasting Bill which will compel the Authority to readvertise all contracts at three yearly intervals, these meetings could well be the only opportunity the public could ever have to make observations to the IBA before radio contracts are awarded. Lord Thomson describes the meetings as 'the biggest exercise in democratic consultation ever invented by a non-governmental body in the UK'. The Lords amendment is due to be discussed in October. At the same time the Lords could lay down some ground rules for the conduct of the public meetings, requiring the Authority to hold them, to provide comprehensive information, to keep a public record of the contributions, and compel the IBA to explain how it uses the views it gathers from these meetings.

A special meeting 'Radio and Television for the People' at which the issues raised in this article will be discussed is being held at the Labour Party conference, 7.30 Monday 29 September at the Hotels Association, Coronation Street, Blackpool.

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*Television meetings are still to be held in: Croydon, Nottingham, Birmingham, London, Leeds, Newcastle upon Tyne, Darlington and Aberdeen. Radio meetings will be held in the following areas: Wrexham/Deesside/Swindon/Wiltshire, Preston/Blackpool, Bury St Edmunds, Guildford, Newport (Gwent), Barnsley, Hereford/Worcester, East Kent, Londonderry. Details are available from the IBA's head office in London.

Sizing up the enemy

Exaggerating your opponent's strength is a useful way to induce alarmism — and encourage the call for more weapons. Continuing our series on the proper defence of Britain, MARY KALDOR examines the strategic deployment of figures in the deterrence game, and the likely consequences.

CLAUSEWITZ COMPARED battle to the act of exchange in the market place. Only war provides an objective test of military requirements. In the absence of war, views about the 'proper defence' of Britain are inherently subjective. Take, for example, the so-called European theatre nuclear balance. According to this year's White Paper, NATO has only 226 nuclear systems in Europe compared with the Warsaw Pact's 920 nuclear systems. Indeed, NATO appears to have *no* missiles at all. A closer inspection reveals that these figures only include 'longer range' land-based systems. They leave out all land-based missiles with a range of less than 600 miles. They leave out American Poseidon missiles assigned to the European command and the British Polaris missiles. And they leave out French sea and land-based missiles.

The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), which is widely considered authoritative, has produced a much 'fairer' presentation of the theatre nuclear balance which covers both long and medium range systems and according to which the Soviet Union enjoys advantage, leaves out NATO's Lance missiles and France's Pluton missiles presumably because their range is just under the 100 miles required for the IISS definition of medium range, although these weapons' range is more than the 100 km required by other definitions. The IISS also provides an estimate of the number of warheads which might be expected to reach their targets in a retaliatory strike which, somewhat surprisingly, assumes that Soviet aircraft have greater ability to survive and greater penetration ability than western aircraft. With different assumptions on these features and on such things as range, utilisation, serviceability or numbers of warheads per system, the balance of advantage could go the other way. Indeed, last year's *Military Balance* showed that NATO and the Warsaw Pact enjoyed approximate parity in theatre nuclear forces. The new Soviet lead, reported in last week's newspapers, has been arrived at not as a result of some spectacular increase in Soviet military forces but through a change of assumptions. For example, the Vulcan, F-111 E/F and the Mirage IV A bombers all carry fewer nuclear bombs than last year. The FB-111 and the Mirage have been left out altogether.

IT IS NOT TOO difficult to imagine how the hawks in the Kremlin view the nuclear balance. They would exclude all nuclear delivery systems based in Eastern Europe: according to the US Secretary of Defence these are not actually armed with nuclear warheads since the warheads are stored in the Soviet Union, presumably for security reasons. The table shows my calculations of such a hypothetic Soviet estimate, which would credit NATO with approximately 7700 theatre nuclear weapons, compared with 2500 possessed by the Warsaw Pact.

The size of NATO's lead is accounted for by the inclusion of short range nuclear weapons for battlefield operations. NATO is said to possess some 300 nuclear demolition mines, M-109 and M-110 howitzers armed with some 3000 rounds of nuclear ammunition, around 320 short range *Honest John* missiles, 700 *Nike Hercules* air defence missiles, and various nuclear armed short range aircraft, making a total of approximately 6000 short range tactical nuclear weapons in Europe. According to some estimates, the Soviet Union has 3500 similar weapons, including 311 *Frogg* missiles and 150 dual-capable artillery tubes, but since those that are armed are kept on Soviet territory, their range would be insufficient, at present, to reach Western Europe.

The debate about Soviet defence expenditure is similarly based on subjective judgments. Because of the difficulty of establishing prices which reflect the true allocation of resources in a centrally planned economy, no-one really knows the true size of Soviet defence expenditure. The lowest figure is that published in the Soviet Union — a constant annual budget figure. The next lowest figure is published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute which attempts to calculate the defence spending included under other budget headings. The CIA attempts to cost the Soviet military forces in both dollar and rouble prices. The highest figure is published — guess where — in the *Peking Review*.

It is interesting that these various estimates all emphasise the opponent's advantage. Surely, the point of deterrence is to do exactly the opposite, to frighten your opponent by exaggerating your own strength. Exaggerating your opponent's strength is, of course, a good way to induce a mood of alarmism and to make a case for more weapons.

In fact, it is hard to see what these estimates of relative strength really mean in military terms. The only prolonged period of warfare that we have actually experienced since 1945 was Vietnam. Even without the use of nuclear weapons, conventional weapons (which include such unconventional monstrosities as herbicides, incendiaries and antipersonnel cluster munitions) proved immensely destructive. They were also clumsy and ineffective. The Middle East war of 1973 lasted only three weeks. During that period, one aircraft was shot down every hour and one tank destroyed

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every quarter of an hour; it took the United States four years to build up its depleted stocks. Who knows how the war would have degenerated had it continued or had either side possessed nuclear weapons? In a future European war, victory would be meaningless not just because of the immense destruction, but because of the difficulty of achieving any clearly defined military objective with the cumbrous and vulnerable instruments of modern warfare. The fine calculations about the military balance, the assessment of particular categories of weapons in particular regions, the idea that you need a cruise missile to stop and SS-20 or an SS-20 to stop a Poseidon, would have no place in the chaos of actual war. Neither Israel nor Vietnam possessed any advantage in comparison with their enemies, according to conventional calculations of the military balance.

THE THEORY of deterrence, some sophisticated proponents might say, is to keep the vision alive. So long as both Russia and America have similar visions of a future war, then their attempts to match each others' arsenals will ensure that neither side will dare to embark on a war. What matters is subjective perception (promoted by arms manufacturers and armed forces on both sides).

But this theory is fatally flawed. It is partly the concept that is undermined as more and more weapons are acquired, increasing 'overkill' and the risk of war by accident or miscalculation. And as weapons become more and more 'usable' in an ever-narrowing effort to prove the 'credibility' of deterrence, the readiness to use nuclear weapons in the event of provocation is also increased. More importantly, the *practice* of deterrence undermines the very stability of the international system.

Weapons are not produced and acquired in a vacuum; they are deeply 'enstructured', to use Edward Thompson's term, in the political economies of the two blocs. The growth of armaments has contributed to economic instability, both East and West; to the growth of bureaucracy, security services and interference with civil liberties in the West; to repression in the East; to underdevelopment and militarism in the Third World. And these phenomena in turn help to explain new conflicts in different parts of the world, the increasing strains within the two alliances, and the consequent growth of alarmism and adventurism in both the United States and the Soviet Union which is associated with the pressure for more armaments. The practice of deterrence has, over the years, gradually embroiled the world in a series of military and economic crises, which appear in the 1980s to be speeding up towards some apocalyptic collision.

The most that Britain can do, in this situation, is to minimise the risk of involvement in that collision. Lord Carver, in the previous article in this series, says that independence is not possible because of the heavy investment we would need to make in building up our own system of conventional or nuclear deterrence. He says this because he himself is trapped, not unexpectedly, in the orthodox vision of World War III. We cannot, of course, prevent ourselves from being blown up, whether independent or not. But we could make invasion or occupation costly and difficult for a potential enemy. Because of the destructiveness of modern warfare, because of the enormous rates of attrition that can be expected, the only conceivable form of defence would entail the tactics of dispersal and concealment that are typical of guerrilla warfare.

Bill Rodgers claims that the opposition to cruise missiles is based on soppy pacificism (although he uses a politer term). This is a total misunderstanding. It is based on a growing awareness, not just among left wingers, of the *irrationality* of present defence policy — its remoteness from any current reality. It is based on the realisation that the presence of nuclear weapons on British territory represents a dangerous convolution of the theory of deterrence and that, as a result, we are more, not less, vulnerable.

The alternative is a policy of territorial defence. It would, of course, be associated with far reaching changes in the organisation of our military institutions, including the defence industry, and integrated, consequently, with alternative economic, social and politico-legal policies. We could not, even so, avoid altogether the collision if it came and, for that reason, we should encourage other countries, both East and West if that is possible, to do the same. This is the only way to begin dismantling the bloc system and the whole military-economic paraphernalia that is upheld by the theory of deterrence.

The real military balance

Long, medium and short-range nuclear systems in the European theatre

Warsaw Pact Systems	Warheads	Nato Systems	Warheads
Long-range		**Long-range**	
105 SS-4/5 RBM	315	45 Poseidon SLBM	400
435 SS-4/5 I/MRBM	435	64 Polaris SLBM	192
60 SS-N-5 SLBM	60	80 French M-20 SLBM	80
30 Backfire bomber	120	57 Vulcan bomber	114
177 Badger/Blinder bomber	354	33 Mirage IVA bomber	33
		109 F-4 fighter bomber	109
		78 F-111 E/F bomber	156
		10 A-6E carrier-based aircraft	20
		20 A-7E " " "	40
		6 Etendard IVM " " "	12
Medium-range		**Medium-range**	
487 SS-12/Scud B SRBM	487	180 Pershing 1A SRBM	180
9 SS-N-4 SLBM	9	90 Lance SRBM	90
54 Fencer fighter bomber	108	32 Pluton SRBM	32
161 Fitter " "	161	30 Buccaneer bomber	60
260 Flogger " "	260	40 Jaguar fighter bomber	40
200 Fishbed " "	200	15 Mirage 111E " "	15
		95 F-104 " "	95
Total long & medium-range		**Total long & medium-range**	
1978	2509	984	1668
Short-range		**Short-range**	
None currently available to hit W. European targets since approx. 3,500 short-range nuclear weapons are kept in USSR		Various systems of 16 types including artillery, mines, missiles and aircraft	6000
Total long, medium & short-range	**2509**	**Total long, medium & short-range**	**7668**

Key:
IRBM = Intermediate Range Missile
MRBM = Medium Range Missile
SLBM = Submarine-launched Ballistic Missile
SRBM = Short Range Ballistic Missile

Sources: Long and medium range figures taken from *The Military Balance 1980-81*, taking into account assumed utilization rates but not serviceability, except for Poseidon, Polaris, Lance and Pluton; *SALT and the NATO Allies*, US Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations Staff Report, Washington DC, October 1979; Ulrich Albrecht, Alain Joxe and Mary Kaldor 'Gegen den Alarmismus' in Studiengruppe *Militarpolitik Aufrüsten um Abjurüsten?*, Rowalt, Hamburg, September 1980.

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London Diary

☐Frank Chapple is not my favourite person of all time. I admit a sneaking preference for Ivan the Terrible. But when they cast him from the inner sanctum of Great Russell Street, I wished that Poland had not featured in his list of crimes. As we suggested a month ago (NS 29 August), a simple statement from the General Council in support of the Polish strikers would have swiftly pricked Frank Chapple's friend-of-the-people balloon. Instead, we were deafened by the sound of Len Murray and David Basnett shuffling from foot to foot, as the egalitarian electrician ran gleeful rings round them.

When they came to pass judgement upon him, they were not short of items to be taken into consideration — what with the Employment Bill and the laggers and the small matter of human rights within his own organisation. What we needed was an announcement that Chapple had been sacked from the key committee of the General Council *in spite of* his support for free trade unions in Poland.

☐At least there is one country where the TUC has taken a principled stand, where it has forsworn all dealings with trade unions favoured by the government and stalwartly championed the opposition. At least, in that one country, the General Council has not been tricked into backing the sinister efforts of pro-government unions to teach people how to read. Yes, indeed, the TUC has refused absolutely to associate with the Central Sandinista de Trabajadores, the largest trade union federation in Nicaragua, where (you will remember) a tightly-knit group of KGB agents and elitist thugs toppled the late, great Somoza.

The General Council explains that it has heard reports of the Nicaraguan government 'using intimidation to eliminate all national trade union organisations except the CST which the government itself has established'. And it says it will not help the Nicaraguan literacy campaign (which is supported by the CST) because 'the TUC should only exceptionally endorse campaigns not related to specific trade union issues.'

Let's leave aside the comical suggestion that literacy is not a trade union matter. Let's leave aside the suggestion that the CST was established by the government (in fact, it emerged out of clandestine workers' committees which had existed long before Somoza's fall). But where did the TUC get the idea that trade unions other than the CST were being 'eliminated'?

Michael Walsh, the man from the Foreign Office who now heads the TUC's International Department, informed me that the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the World Confederation of Labour (WCL) had complained that their affiliates in Nicaragua were being 'intimidated'. He was very surprised when I told him that the Social-Christian Nicaraguan Federation of Workers (the WCL affiliate) had ceased protesting many months ago, its membership having *trebled* since the revolution. That left the allegation from the ICFTU-affiliated Confederation for Trade Union Unification — a small outfit known to have been the least combative under Somoza, and to have received aid from the CIA-linked American Institute for Free Labour Development.

Had the TUC checked out the allegation before finalising its policy? Why yes, said Mr Walsh, he would have consulted as a matter of course the International Metalworkers Federation and the International Transport Workers Federation.

The IMF has no affiliates in Nicaragua, nor any records of such consultations with the TUC. Harold Lewis, who heads the International Transport Workers, flatly denies having talked to the TUC about Nicaragua at any time within the last year. Had Mr Walsh made any other inquiries. Yes, of course. He had consulted the British government.

☐I have been blessed throughout my grown-up life with a large and strong network of women friends, and I have watched them closely, anxiously, over the years. A fair amount of marrying and divorcing and cohabiting and separating has gone on, but — mercifully — very little in the way of reproduction. Until now.

I visit Mary to inspect six-day-old Kate, and with me comes Angela, proud parent of six-month-old Alex. As my two friends exchange notes about labour pains and feeding times, locked in a wonderful conspiracy of expertise, I look on with rising panic. There are suddenly an *awful lot* of babies about. I've subscribed for some time to the Domino Theory of maternity and now my fears are being confirmed.

It hasn't been easy for any of us to take the plunge. Well-educated and middle-class, we are not the sort of women for whom babies can just 'happen along'. So we have played with the idea endlessly — longing and dithering like children at the edge of a chilly sea. But of course the goddam tide is coming in. And soon there'll be no beach left to dither on. Thirty-two . . . thirty-three . . . thirty-four . . . in they go, one after another, waving and beckoning to the next. One more pregnancy and I'll order the bombing of Mothercare. Or the rest of us will not sleep soundly in our beds.

☐I am a defender of Tony Benn (he could use a few) and when I heard that the 100th anniversary issue of *Spare Rib,* out next month, was running a big interview with him, I begged a preview. Connoisseurs of flannel should not miss this exquisite specimen. Interviewers Ruth Wallsgrove and Ruthie Petrie are courteous but insistent and Mr Benn wriggles like a frog in a schoolgirl's fist. A *soupcon* for you.

Benn: Women must link their struggle to a wider analysis . . . *Wallsgrove:* The women's movement is concerned with economic issues, culture, personal relationships . . . how can your 'straightforward socialist analysis' be wider than that? *Benn:* Go international . . . the Brandt Report . . . shows exploitation by capital of people who are selling their labour around the world. *Petrie:* How can you talk about the Brandt Report without taking account of the fact that all aid programmes overlook women . . . The male view is that women have to come into the real world. *Benn:* I'm certainly not saying that . . . *Wallsgrove:* What have you learnt from the women's liberation movement? *Benn:* Campaign against the Corrie anti-abortion Bill . . . imposed their attention on me . . . I learnt that problems are not solved and injustices not corrected without people fighting around them. *Wallgrove:* That suggests all you've learnt is that women aren't completely passive politically . . . What has the feminist analysis added to *your* analysis . . .?

Bear in mind that Benn could not have acquitted himself any worse than any of his fellow front-benchers. Which is a terrible indictment of the Labour leadership.

☐ Unlike members of the Prix Italia jury, I found myself nodding off for a moment or two during *Creggan,* Mary Holland's documentary on Northern Ireland Catholics. But then they didn't have to watch it after 11 oclock at night and as a late viewer, I'm a hopeless case. Unlike anything else I've watched at that hour, however, every minute of *Creggan* that I did see has stayed with me, so close and relentless was its focus on a subject we are used to holding at an embarrassed distance.

Of course, it was no accident that Thames put it on so late, nor that they sat on it for nine months beforehand. I asked Nigel Ryan, head of Current Affairs at Thames, when they would show it again. He very charmingly told me that he had no idea, he hoped they would, but they were very booked up. Mary Holland and director Michael Whyte have been trying to get permission to do another programme — this time on the Protestant community. I asked Mike Wooller, head of Documentaries, if they would now be given the go-ahead. He told me very charmingly that he did not know. They were considering it along with at least 100 other proposals, of which 10 might be chosen. Perhaps . . . but they were very booked up.

☐ And while we're on the subject of prizes, this year's Arthur Scargill Award for enlightened trade union journalism goes to *The London Post,* organ of the Union of Communication Workers' London Districts Council. Its latest feature, under the headline 'Here she is folks!' announces 'the first in what we hope will be a long line of our own page three girls.'

'Fun loving' Molly is 'captured' in the role of a beach model (she is also one of the UCW's first women drivers) and readers are warned: 'For those who would like to be more friendly. . . hard luck, because unfortunately for you little Molly has a Mrs in front of her name, being happily married to one Jimmy Long, also a postman at W.D.O. Better luck next time fellas.'

Anna Coote

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ Last year a total of 164,000 tonnes of all plastics goods — worth around £253m — was imported into the UK. The report reveals that this included 12.6 tonnes of plastic back scratchers, sex aids, teats, toothpicks, face shields, inhalers, sanitary articles, disposable gloves and plastic blisters. — *Financial Times* (A.B. Knight)

☐ He had introduced the rule at another pub he had run eight years ago after two lesbians had been drinking pints. 'They were making their affections for each other clear for all to see so I decided to bar pints for ladies,' he said. — *Guardian* (Margare Majumdar)

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

You old sweetie

From Lord Jellicoe, Chairman, Tate & Lyle Ltd

Your article 'White gold and black consequences' (*NS* 19 September) contains a number of tendentious statements which I could easily challenge. But let them pass. For the most part they fall into the category of good clean, albeit biased, fun. However, the charge of more or less 'ugly' exploitation by Tate & Lyle in Belize and Zimbabwe is something which I cannot allow to pass unanswered.

Tate & Lyle entered the Belizean sugar industry in 1963. The finance and know-how we have contributed have helped to raise output from 18,000 tonnes a year then to over 100,000 tonnes, to make Belize an efficient producer and vigorous competitor in the market and to ensure that the local population share fully in the industry's prosperity. In 1972 we took the initiative to transfer virtually all of the cane lands into the hands of local farmers and we have fulfilled our pledge to the Government given at the beginning of our involvement to train Belizeans to fill all technical and administrative posts in the Company. There are now only three expatriate employees. All in all, I am very proud of the achievements of Take & Lyle in Belize.

Similar policies direct our operations in Zimbabwe where our principal interest is not in sugar production but in sugar refining. Now that the internationally recognised government of Robert Mugabe is in power we are already pursuing all available opportunities to play a full and active part in the development of the country's agricultural sector.

Sugar Quay, Lower Thames Street, London EC3

Prisons as a last resort

From W.R. Weston, Chief Probation Officer, West Yorkshire

It is time we faced the real reasons why we knowingly and persistently keep our prisons overcrowded to the very limits of their endurance, in spite of sustained publicity about the gross waste and ineffectiveness of imprisonment in many cases (especially the drunks, the inadequates and the other groups mentioned by Roger Attrill, *NS* 19 September). Large numbers of men in these groups, usually persistent middle-range offenders, are in fact kept from further crime for longer by a two-year probation order than by six-month prison sentence — at a fraction of the cost in financial terms alone to say nothing of the personal and social damage caused by imprisonment.

The present situation points to the unpalatable conclusion that our society actually enjoys inflicting punishment more than we hate crime. We need to accept this truth and be committed instead to a simple and practicable aim for the criminal courts and the penal system — to deal with the convicted offender in such a way as to keep him from further crime for as long and as cost/effectively as possible.

This would mean that the simple penalties of fines etc., which are highly effective in the majority of minor and some more serious cases, would continue to be used, and measures such as probation would be used to the full for offenders who could thus be kept from crime while under supervision without unacceptable risk. The prisons could then do their true job properly, acting as society's measure of last resort in holding those offenders who cannot be acceptably kept from further crime by any less costly measure.

20/30 Lawefield Lane, Wakefield

Investigating Rampton

From P. Rushworth, Acting General Secretary, Prison Officers' Association

I refer to the article by Francis Wheen (Notes, *NS* 22 August) which suggested that although the police have done a thorough job in investigating complaints made against the staff at Rampton they have done so in spite of lack of assistance from the Prison Officers' Association. This assertion is factually incorrect.

The Prison Officers' Association was the first organisation to welcome the decision of the Secretary of State to call in the police to investigate the allegations of ill-treatment made public by Yorkshire Televison in May 1979. Throughout the period immediately prior to the screening of *Rampton — The Secret Hospital* the Prison Officers' Association said quite clearly that if the producers of the programme really believed what they were claiming then they should have put the matter to the police long before.

From the outset the staff at Rampton has conformed with the instructions of the Prison Officers' Association to co-operate with the police. The only condition the Union makes is that its members should be legally represented. This is a matter of national POA policy, established years before the Rampton investigation, and not purpose-planned specifically to meet the needs of the present investigation.

It is unfortunate that the author of your article has committed himself to print and has criticised the POA without first approaching our organisation and checking the facts. However, our experience proves this to be a fairly typical oversight which adds the names of Francis Wheen and the *New Statesman* to the list of uninformed critics of the staff at Rampton.

Cronin House, 245 Church Street, London N9

Lovers & Geniuses

From Gordon McVay

John Willett ends his basically sympathetic review of my book *Isadora and Esenin* (*NS* 12 September) in needless bewilderment over its 'copyright by somebody called Ardis', and off-beam innuendoes about 'that unforgettable smell of Soviet bindings' and 'interesting possibilities in left-wing bibliophilia . . .' The explanation is very simple. Ardis Publishers, headed by Carl and Ellendea Proffer (2901 Heatherway, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104) are the American printers and publishers of both my books, which were then taken up by two different English co-publishers. Ardis specialises in Russian and Soviet literature, and has no discernible political bias. Besides issuing the journal *Russian Literature Triquarterly* (since 1971), it has published studies and translations of Akhmatova, Babel, Bulgakov, Mandelstam, Tsvetaeva, the Russian Futurists, and many more, as well as reprints and texts in Russian. Interested readers, including Mr Willett, might write direct to Ardis for their catalogues.

31 Oakfields Road, Cringleford, Norwich

Resettling the Boat People?

From Viet Lazarus

You were quite correct, in your Notes (*NS* 22 August), to draw attention to the British Government's duplicity in contriving to make political capital out of its 'humanitarianism' with regard to the Vietnamese 'boat people' while failing to provide adequate means or facilities for their resettlement in Britain. If my experience is anything to go by, this duplicity would appear to be compounded in practice by the administrative negligence of some of the personnel at the Aid Centres themselves.

Earlier this year I contacted the BCAR (who were then, as now, lamenting their shortage of specialised teachers of English as a Foreign language) to offer my assistance as a qualified and experienced EFL teacher. I was invited to an interview by the selfsame Robert Hood whom you cite as a source in your Notes. At this interview I was informed that, by virtue of my formal qualifications, my fluency in Mandarin and Cantonese, and my rudimentary knowledge of Vietnamese, I was definitely in a position to be able to contribute towards the BCAR's resettlement programme. Acting upon this information, indeed, I began to take Vietnamese lessons with a view to improving my knowledge of the language to conversational level. I was told that I would be contacted in due course, but although I followed up my interview through letters and telephone calls, I never was. Far from being able to help, as I had hoped, I found that my offer of assistance was not even favoured with a refusal.

Reading Mr Hood's observation that the shortage of skilled teachers presented an enduring and even advancing problem, I wondered whether other offers of assistance from qualified teachers had perhaps suffered the same fate as mine. In the present time of need, one such error might constitute nothing more than an unfortunate oversight, but more than one would seem to be symptomatic of incompetence.

4 Airlie Gardens, London W8

The Jerusalem problem

From Dr Pinchas Lazar

David Mandel ('Jerusalem's divisive "unity" ', *NS* 29 August) accuses Israel of harming peace hopes by refusing to redivide Jerusalem.

Semantic acrobatics are now being performed to prove that Israel is not entitled to her capital city. Jerusalem was already the capital city of the Jewish people 3,000 years ago. In the first century AD over 100,000 Jews died defending it against its Roman conquerors. It has since been conquered by Arabs, Crusaders, Mamelukes, Ottomans, etc. Interestingly, after its conquerors lost it, for centuries they, including the Arabs, never reclaimed it. Only the evicted Jews never ceased to maintain their claim. They alone have an historic and legal claim because any other would be based on conquest by force, in contradiction to the legal principle *ex injuria jus non oritur* and to Article 4(2) of the UN Charter.

Nonetheless the semantic hocus-pocus about annexation proceeds with the aim of pressuring Israel to withdraw to the 1967 lines, including the redivision of Jerusalem. This would remove her defensive capability, exposing her to non-existent Arab goodwill and a potential second Auschwitz. Apart from the ensuing intolerable physical vulnerability, withdrawal and redivision would amount to Israel's renunciation of her legal and historic rights, the self-denial of her religious-national heritage and acquiescence in international anti-Israel discrimination (the right of the victim of aggression, by customary law, to territorial adjustment).

The only realistic and just solution to the Jerusalem 'problem' is Arab acceptance of minority status with minority rights within democratic Israel, with the free option for every Arab to move to Jordan, which is the Palestinian Arab State comprising over three-quarters of Mandatory Palestine. The trouble, however, is that the Arabs, who do not excel in modesty, are encouraged in their maximalist approach by Western grovelling in the mistaken hope that sacrificing Israel will secure cheap oil and fat order-books, not realising that the destruction of Israel would whet the Muslim Arab appetite and that the heat would then be turned against the Christian infidels of the West.

50a/4, Rehov Harofe, Haifa, Israel

National intelligence

From P.H. Cox

Ross Terrill (*NS* 12 September) calls the Chinese 'an intelligent people'. Obviously this is the result of sloppy thinking rather than a racialist philosophy but surely the existence of intelligent people implies the existence of unintelligent people. Would any reader care to list those nations which are unintelligent?

18 Malford Grove, Gilwern, Abergavenny

Information wanted

For a biographical study of novelist John Braine: I would appreciate hearing from anybody who has letters, anecdotes, or other relevant material.

Prof. Dale Salwak, Dept. of English, Citrus College, 18824 East Foothill Blvd, Azusa, CA 91702, USA

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FIRST PERSON
Arthur Marshall

All bull

Among the many joyous features and activities of my happy daily life here at 'Myrtlebank' — tapping the barometer, admiring the flower beds (dahlias 'a sight' at the moment), playing a selection of 78s (dear Binnie Hale singing away, clear as a bell, in *Mr Cinders*), making chicken stock (so satisfactory to see those sad bones and the unsightly carcase producing additional nourishment, further and rewarding proof for a conscientious hen that she did not sacrifice her life in vain), answering the telephone ('Bunty here. How's about dindins Tuesday?'), and listening to the wireless (and very often to the third programme, a real musical feast for the ear and with gracious Patricia Hughes, my favourite voice, in cultured command) — I doubt if anything gives me greater pleasure than the use, at washing up time (and how speedily round it comes), of my bottle of Goddard's Silver Dip ('Cleans Silver Safely'). Tarnished cutlery, plunged momentarily into the bottle's colourless depths, emerges brightly shining and as though reborn. It is almost worth deliberately tarnishing several forks and spoons (eggs seem to do the trick) in order to observe this minor miracle at work. The dazzlingly successful liquid has, I see, a British patent number, and quite right too, and was dreamt up by J. Goddard of Leicester. J for John, would you think? Or Julian? Jeremy? Jasper? Public recognition must surely have been his and anyway, he is Sir Jasper and a knight in shining armour as far as I am concerned, Lord Goddard having been already, as a name, snapped up.

I forget now the precise twists and turns of fate that brought me to my enjoyment of Goddard's in all its glory, and quaint indeed are the chances and flukes that rule our lives, a fact which has already been fairly fully commented on by the poet Shakespeare and others, not least The Book of Common Prayer in that collect with which they recommend the clergy to let fly after the Offertory has been safely gathered in (and how strangely immodest and unchristian, but oh how practical, is that injunction to 'let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works', with its blatant encouragement to show off by thrusting into the bag a rustling fiver). A friend of mine, happily married these many years, once worked out, in a moment of especially dotty and besotted admiration and adoration, how many of life's coincidences had led him to her who was to become, to their mutual satisfaction and benefit, his wife, and he discovered that the odds against them ever meeting were 289, the first, and perhaps most important one, being that he hadn't, as he pointed out to me, been born a woman. 'Or born with 98 extra legs,' I said, witty as ever, 'in which case you would have been a centipede.' But, starry-eyed as he was, he seemed at the time to be in no mood for such merriment.

There are, of course, those who consider that we are all to some extent influenced throughout life by the hour and the date when we were born, and which heavenly body was where at the time, and who set great store by being a Scorpio or a Capricorn or whatever, a fact which reminds me of a jolly moment in one of those hilarious Alan Melville *Sweet and Low* wartime revues at the Ambassadors' (such a charming little theatre) when somebody keen on astrology asked Hermione Gingold, masquerading as a terrible old crone on a park bench and messily munching sandwiches out of her gas-mask container, the date of her birthday. 'September 16th' she replied, to which the answer was 'Oh, then that makes you a Virgo', upon which Miss Gingold, lowering her tones to that unforgettably dark brown ale level, said, loud and clear, 'Does it? That's clever of it!' There is also, when considering our lives and our futures and the influences upon them, the little matter of DNA, the wholly alarming hereditary code that one wishes had never been discovered (how about a Nobel Prize for suppressing potential horrors and *not* discovering something?) and with which scientists, their fingers already itching, are bound sooner or later to attempt disastrously to tamper.

Always keen to give anything reasonable a whirl and to try anything once, though I draw the line at skateboards, I have been dipping interestedly into a splendid Corgi book of 1977 called, quite simply, *Taurus* (for such indeed, and how very unsuitably, am I) and which announces itself as being 'your permanent astro guide', and what could possibly be more helpful? The American author or authors, bashful and unnamed, appear to think very well of us as a class ('Whatever in the world would we do without you, Taurus?'), speak warmly and correctly of our 'strong artistic tendencies' (my tasteful flower arrangements are quite a little feature of the great saloons and reception areas of 'Myrtlebank') and only very occasionally make what seems to be a tiny blunder, as for example when describing our pleasure in foreign travel: 'You swing along with the bouncing verve of the good-neighbour tourist' they say, clearly not having witnessed my sedate and non-bouncing progress down (and even sedater when up) the considerable slope that leads from our Italian hotel to the town of Amalfi. Nor can I 'go along', as our American chums phrase it, with the view that 'it is not unusual for the male Taurus to pamper himself with bath oils and salts, and a husky male scent or talcum powder. He loves fragrance,' after which, and throwing discretion to the winds, there is a reference to 'seductive magnetism'. Gossip is not unknown in our dear Devon village of Appleton and if clouds of talcum powder and husky male scents were seen and smelt emerging from my bathroom window, tongues would, as they say, wag. And I have no intention of trying out my seductive magnetism on Mrs Mountjoy when next she calls ('Only me, and on the scrounge again!') for an item for her Nearly New stall at the church fête.

At times my astro guide alternates much too sharply between praise and blame, sunshine and shadow, joy and grief. 'A Taurus can be a hatful of fun' it says encouragingly, and then hurries on to cancel out this well-deserved encomium by announcing that 'Taurus folk have a tendency to suffer from earache, mumps, tonsillitis and goitre' and are not hatfuls of fun at all. Did you ever! And then, after asuring myself and other Taureans that we 'can attain high levels of physical competence and timing in acrobatics, trapeze work and gymnastics' (and here I really have news for my astro guide!), there is a reference to our being 'prone to gout, varicose veins and weak ankles'. Although I have to admit, which I freely do, that my trapeze work is rusty, my ankles are as shapely and sturdy as ever they were. There is also a paragraph which I am trying to forgive (for in my case it is all too true) and forget to the effect that Taurus people are inclined, 'but always, mind you, with studied good manners', to eat and drink a pinch too liberally. The damaging words 'downright gluttonous' appear, and, as one runs one's mind over the food consumed during the day (that second doughnut!), not to speak of that third orangeade, one hangs the head in shame.

There is, I grieve to say, further hard hitting in the section headed Moon in Taurus, one of the sections in the sound of which there is such a hint of indelicacy (Mars in Leo, Neptune in Virgo, while absolutely nothing connected with Uranus has a healthy ring to it). It has a sentence which runs 'You may be boringly conservative' and although here the criticism is not a political one and merely means 'lacking in originality', there are some who will, I am well aware, interpret it more widely. While there is this sad tendency on the part of the authors to harp when they think they are on to a good thing ('You may be on the chubby side'), they do thoughtfully provide sunshine after rain in the form of a graceful compliment: 'You are an entertaining and gracious host with a flair for providing lavish and glamorous flourishes.' This can only refer to those tasteful little sprigs of parsley which, on festive occasions, I dot about among my butter balls. I always felt that this agreeable little touch would not go unnoticed.

Roger Woddis

Do not drop

US Defence Secretary Harold Brown said there was 'no destruction of the nuclear warhead, no release of radiation material and no loss of security' as a result of the Titan II missile accident at Damascus, Arkansas.

Everything's fine and dandy in Damascus,
They've swept up what remains of Titan II.
  A spanner in the works
  Can only frighten jerks
Who fail to see such accidents
Are really nothing new.

Nobody needs to fret about our warheads,
Nine megatons don't worry Harold Brown.
  He knows a minor scare
  Is neither here nor there;
We've got to keep pretences up,
Whatever else falls down.

Nothing can cause disaster in Damascus,
The comfort of the Bible sets us right:
  As Saul of Tarsus strode
  Along that famous road,
  He saw a flash from heaven
  That made his mind explode.
The rest of us would maybe sleep at night,
If Brown could be converted
By a sudden flash of light.

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Autumn Books

Rayner Heppenstall

Vile Bodies

The Letters of Evelyn Waugh edited by Mark Amory *Weidenfeld* £14.95

Mr Amory has selected 800 out of a possible 5,000 letters. Those to Fr. D'Arcy were unavailable, which is a pity, the obstructor presumably being the Society of Jesus. Apart from the well-known paranoia and snobbery, the most objectionable pervasive feature of these letters is perhaps the regular indecency in the many to the Ladies Dorothy and Mary Lygon, as though these two were understood to expect at least one indecency per letter. There is a great deal of wit, but little which made me laugh.

On the whole, however, these letters provide a good picture of the working, social, adventuring and amorous life of a good, hard-working and hard-living writer, prone to awful behaviour, stories about which are now, 14 years after his death, in danger of becoming better known than his books.

Unfortunately, Waugh makes a point of never discussing his work. This is the case with other good writers of his time, notably the slightly younger Samuel Beckett. With the few good writers with whom he kept up a protracted correspondence, John Betjeman, Cyril Connolly, Henry Green, Graham Greene, Nancy Mitford, he is prodigal of criticism variously perceptive.

Chronologically, a mere 42 pages take us through Lancing, Oxford and a brief period teaching to the success of *Decline and Fall* and the humiliating end of a first marriage. There follow 80 pages to which Mr Amory gives the heading 'Between Marriages' but which cover the years from 1929 to the outbreak of war, two years after the second marriage.

Waugh was at this time very active, travelling in Africa and South America, visiting Spitzbergen, getting himself converted to Roman Catholicism and publishing four more novels, *Vile Bodies, Black Mischief, A Handful of Dust* and *Scoop,* as well as travel books, a life of Edmund Campion (first fruits mund Campion (first fruits of his conversion) and a volume of short stories.

The war covers a further 80 pages. Waugh spent it off Dakar, in Crete and Jugoslavia and variously elsewhere, in and out of uniform, begetting children and publishing two more novels, *Put Out More Flags* and *Brideshead Revisited.* Most of the letters during this period are addressed to his wife, over whose child-bearing he sympathises. He also scrupulously thanks her each time for his comfortable leave. This is touching and a little odd.

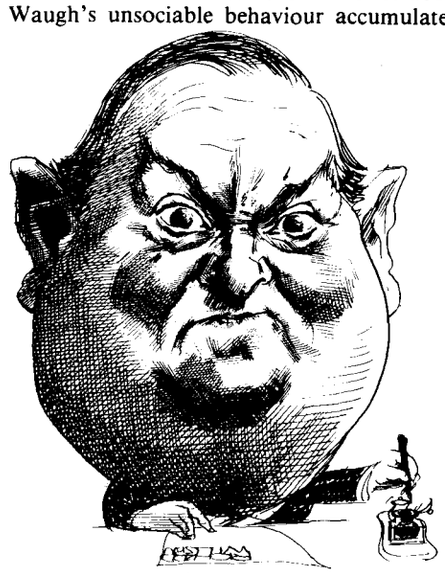
Mr Amory's last two sections are much longer. One is headed 'A Family in the Country'. For the other, Mr. Amory has not been able to resist the bad taste heading, 'Decline and Fall'. 'A Family in the Country' takes us from 1945 to 1956. It is the most interesting as well as the longest section of these letters. It is also the saddest.

Foreign travel was restricted mainly to Europe and the United States. There was an attempt to convert John Betjeman, whose wife had already been converted, with arguments about the validity of Anglican orders and other such theological old hat. *The Loved One, Helena* and *Men at Arms* were published.

All this while, Waugh was bawling out waiters and club servants, as formerly he had bawled out private soldiers. Picasso and Proust were reviled.

Insomnia led to the consumption of large quantities of sleeping pills, accompanied by much after-dinner drinking (of *crème de menthe,* one understands, as no doubt less hard on the night-time bladder than whisky and water). In 1954 occurred the breakdown with hallucinations while on a sea voyage to Ceylon, to be recorded three years later in *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold.*

It was, however, in the year after the breakdown that the best-known stories about Waugh's unsociable behaviour accumulated.



There are stories, here reflected in letters, concerning Alan Brien, Lord Noel-Buxton and Nancy Spain, this last successfully stung for libel damages. Also reflected is the letter Waugh wrote to the director general of the BBC to complain of 'The Critics' for speaking of him as Waugh (not Mr Waugh) and of 'the Director of the Spoken Word' for saying that he had no authority to order them to observe polite conventions. That, it may be remembered, was also the year when Nancy Mitford invented the game of U and non-U, in which Waugh conspicuously joined.

He was beginning to be known as a fat popinjay. Yet, two years later, in *Gilbert Pinfold,* he gives us a surprisingly honest portrait of himself at his worst. Many years earlier, he had expressed his dislike of *Vile Bodies* on grounds of its snobbery. He was sensible about P. G. Wodehouse, whom he admits as an influence on his early books. And he wrote two appreciative letters to George Orwell, commonly thought of as a Left-wing figure, though the 'message' of the books he appreciates, *Animal Farm* and *1984,* is far from Left-wing.

Here, I may be allowed to introduce and correct my one story about Evelyn Waugh, thus recounted in a letter to Nancy Mitford of November 1946:

> A beast called Rayner Heppenstall tried to make me go a round of Europe to broadcast a message of Xmas goodwill. Me of all people. I said £300, he said £50 so there the matter ended. I wonder whom they will send.

As a very junior producer at the BBC, I was not allowed to discuss money, and I do not think that any particular sums were mentioned.

What I do remember, however, is that Waugh said he was accustomed to live luxuriously and that he might do it if he was also given his fee in foreign currency, this being the bait, as well as the prestige of conducting the world round-up which introduced the monarch's Christmas Day message. I said that I did not know whether this was possible or not, but that I would report upwards and see. At this point, Waugh got his hat and stick and marched out of White's without a word of farewell, leaving me stranded in a club I did not know.

But evidently he repeated the story later, with trimmings, to Christopher Sykes, in whose biography of Waugh I am maligned under a false name which Sykes presumably supposed would protect him against libel proceedings. Among other things, it appears that I afterwards pursued machinations agianst Waugh at the BBC. I cannot remember who went instead, for I was not deputed to meet him.

But let us move forward to 'Decline and Fall'. The period was spent no longer at Piers Court, but at Combe Florey, near Taunton, more properly in a squirearchical position, since there were no longer eminent neighbours as at Stinchcombe.

But what with growing obesity, increasing deafness and the Vatican council, Waugh was certainly not a happy man. That Waugh grew old and died 'before his time' (as Mr Amory says) is a matter not to be measured by number of years. Waugh had lived fast, if not hard. His wartime children were growing up, and he seems to have been fond of them in a distant kind of way. There was still some foreign travel, to Rhodesia and again to British Guiana (as these were then called). The war trilogy was finished and published in one volume. Waugh was 62 when he died of a heart attack.

Fourteen years after his death revaluation ought to be possible. I doubt whether it is necessary.

Waugh clearly never had anything to teach us, except that a man may act like a fool and yet remain a master of English prose narrative, perhaps the finest in this century. His acknowledged masters were Matthew Arnold and John Henry Newman.

When the diaries came out seven years ago, it was said in clubland that the late Evelyn Waugh had clearly been (in clubland language) a shit. I do not suppose that even then it was doubted that *Decline and Fall* had been a comic masterpiece or that *A Handful of Dust* was, if anything, better.

These letters are, on the whole, less interesting than the diaries, so much of the wit being mirthless, the susceptibilities of the recipients having to be considered. That Waugh was one of the great letter-writers will not, I fancy, be said, except, it may be, by certain of the surviving recipients.

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Margaretta D'Arcy

Hate & Horror

On the Blanket: The H Block Story by TIM PAT COOGAN *Ward River Press/Quartet* £2.50

I have just spent three months, with 30 young women, on the no-wash protest in Armagh Gaol, locked up 23 hours a day, windows blocked, walls covered with excrement, no books allowed, no radio, no external stimulation except for religious pamphlets and the Bible. It is hard for me to review this book objectively without being overtaken by a most subjective complex of multiple emotions and fleeting images . . . Orpheus returning from the Underworld, his grief at having to leave Eurydice behind; tiny grey figurines of incarcerated women warriors fixed into eternity, peeping out from their half-lit caves, flesh wasting away from their young bones; Pauline McClaughlin, five-and-a-half stone in weight, 19 years old, looking like a withered old woman of 80, gums shrunken and teeth falling out — painful to see her without sobbing. 'Don't stare at her, she doesn't like it,' the girls whispered to me on my first day at Mass in the chapel . . .

Mr Coogan describes *his* first sight of two H Block prisoners in their cell (he was not allowed to speak to them, just to observe them through the opened door like a visitor to the zoo):

> The only time I have ever experienced a sensation like it was on being briefly locked into one of the punishment cells used for Irish Fenian prisoners in Tasmania . . . when I emerged blinking from the dark I for a moment relived and empathised with the hate and horror of that ancient chapter of the story that is still being written in H Block.

The most significant thing about this book is that it is the first one by a respectable 'established' person to appear since the protest against criminalisation began in 1976. Also significant is the permission afforded to its author by the North of Ireland Office to enter both Long Kesh and Armagh Prisons. Tim Pat Coogan is editor of *The Irish Press* (Dublin), the largest-circulation daily in Ireland, owned by the son of the late Eamonn De Valera, and following the Fianna Fail line in politics. He has a great reputation for standing up against the Cosgrave Coalition and championing the freedom of the press at a time when that government was clamping down ferociously on all information about the condition of political prisoners in Portlaoise and the methods of interrogation that had been employed against them by the Garda Siochana and its 'heavy gang'. *The Irish Press* was in fact prosecuted, along with *Hibernia* magazine, for contempt of court ('on charges connected with the treatment of IRA prisoners') and won its case.

The publication of *On the Blanket,* at a most urgent pace (Mr Coogan's visit to Armagh took place a few days after I had been put inside there in the middle of May: and the completed book appeared in the shops before the end of June) makes one wonder if it is not all part of some diplomatic manoeuvre to get Britain out of the apparently hopeless and potentially dangerous deadlock which the H Block intransigence has created, before the point of no return is reached and the wildfire consequences spill over the Border. (After all there are hundreds of Republican prisoners in the south of Ireland). For the tone of the book is extremely lucid, rational, compassionate, with good historical and social background:

> I do not subscribe to the belief that it is the karma of England and Ireland to torture each other forever. The two countries can and should, I believe, work out a destiny of mutual respect, interdependence, and, at the same time, independence. There is no hope of doing this while the problem of the prisons in Northern Ireland remains unsolved. Solving the issue of the H Blocks and Armagh will not of itself immediately lead to an all-Irish solution. Not solving it, however, renders any hope of progress, towards any form of peace, utterly impossible.

Altogether it would seem ideally adapted to the careful political purpose of Mr Haughey and his cabinet in attempting to make Westminster see sense without too much loss of face and without handing the IRA a 'victory' on a plate . . .

For instance, Mr Coogan suggests that a useful precedent can be found in the way that Fianna Fail handled the results of the Cosgrave Coalition's 'submit-or-die' confrontation with Republican 'subversives' in 1977. This he describes as 'a very Irish way' of dealing with such problems — i.e: do it all from the top, quiet conversations in gentlemen's clubs, and never let the turbulent masses know what is going on until you can present them with a *fait accompli.* Personally I don't think this is a very 'Irish' way — it seems to me, rather, to be typically British — at any rate, typically establishment. He is also pointing

out to the British Government that the masses have not yet got going on the H Block issue: there is no doubt that his newspaper is not inciting them in this direction, and it is evident that he is in considerable fear of what might happen if the agitation became really widespread. The Fianna Fail Government — contrary to propaganda in the London press — is extremely anti-IRA and has hitherto made every effort to avert public discussion of H Block on the ground that it would give aid and succour to the Provos.

An anonymous 'tall, pale-faced grey-suited Tory' at Stormont told Mr Coogan that 'a mistake had been made' when special category status was introduced. But the removal of special category by the *Labour* administration in 1976 was surely more than the simple reversal of an earlier error. Mr Coogan says:

> Probably the most important part of the entire H Block saga will never fully be known — that relating to the negotiations which took place with the prisoners within the compounds, at the same time that the IRA leadership outside was engaged in Truce talks with Mr Merlyn Rees's emissaries.

He is talking about 1974-5, when it seemed a though Direct Rule was going to bring a radical change towards 'Normalisation and Ulsterisation', though — scarcely comprehended at the time — these could take place only if accompanied by 'Criminalisation' Was this primarily a well-thought-out political decision with the Labour Party fully aware of its implications? Or was it imposed on the Government by military strategists, a sign of the confusion and weak posture of Harold Wilson vis-à-vis the Army after the latter refusal to move against the Ulster 'Worker strike in 1974? It certainly looks more like a ideal Staff College blueprint than a politician's grass-root instinct. If internment has failed because of public outrage, something equally sweeping must be found to replace and to facilitate the Army's need (a) to provide a prestige-accumulating laboratory exemplar for other democracies threatened by regular insurgents, (b) to appear to be win

Olive Schreiner

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ing, and (c) to cripple the IRA's hold of the romantic imagination of ghetto youth. So: label them as common criminals and institutionalise them into the British way of life through the normal regime of a civilian gaol. There is no *war* in Ireland, only unmotivated violence . . .

Westminster obligingly set in motion what has become known as the 'Conveyor Belt': special arrest techniques, special interrogation with torture, special courts administering special emergency legislation, specially long sentences, and all because Northern Ireland turns out to be a 'special case'. The only *special* missing being that of the special category. The IRA's response was predictable — non-co-operation and assassination of warders: 'We are prepared to die to retain political status. Those who try to take it away must be fully prepared to pay the same price.'

At first it seemed as though the Government's gamble might have paid off. The population outside was intimidated and subdued, there was little support for the original blanket men. But then the escalation into the 'dirt protest' and its spread to Armagh took everyone by surprise — according to Mr Coogan, even the IRA. The determination of the prisoners themselves had achieved its own momentum. Armed struggle on the street became neo-Gandhian endurance in the gaols, throwing the shamed authorities into hysterical fury. Messages poured out of the Blocks — either mass mobilisation or mass hunger-strikes, for conditions were now unbearable.

Thus came about a completely new development alongside the conventional Republican Movement: the broad-front National Smash H Block Committee, agitation for the prisoners' Five Demands (no specific call for political status, nor for support of the IRA). Two prominent adherents of this Committee have been assassinated during the last three months — John Turnly — and my own personal friend, Miriam Daly. Nevertheless, the groundswell of public opinion is moving (and if this continues, the political effect upon the static quagmire of Ireland can only be progressive): artists and intellectuals have demonstrated in Dublin, the Labour Party NEC has brought the issue forward, and the response to two individual tangential hunger-strikes has given some indication of the tensions to be aroused by the same event on a multiple scale.

The decision of three of us from Women Against Imperialism, to go to gaol rather than pay the fines for speaking the truth about prison conditions at a peaceful demonstration, was in order to be sure that we *had* been speaking the truth. In fact, I discovered a dimension of Gothic horror that I had not anticipated. As I am half-Jewish, the extremity of the Nazi camps has long been built into my sub-conscious. In Armagh I was brought face to face with the same machinery that conditioned the Auschwitz guards. The warders (female, *and male*), the prison visitors, and particularly the doctor — most of them Irish — were alienated from human responsibility and adulthood. Westminster in its myopic and wrong-headed obstinacy has turned its gaol-servants into pariahs in return for enormous wage-packets, and has cast them adrift in a rudderless boat commanded by a cross between the Ancient Mariner and Captain Bligh . . .

LOVE AND LOVE SICKNESS

The Science of Sex, Gender Difference and Pair-bonding

John Money

The author leads the reader through a fascinating array of topics relating to difference between the sexes, from, as he says, "making a baby to learning mathematics". Among his subjects are the behaviour of the sexes as seen throughout history; irreducible, derivative, and arbitrary sex roles; how men and women differ in aggression and dominance, parenting, and in mathematical, verbal, and praxic reasoning; principles of erotic sexuality; the pathology of love; sexual taboos in Western culture; pornography; and, in an appendix, the treatment of sex offenders. 256 pages, £9.50

TRAUMATIC ABUSE AND NEGLECT OF CHILDREN AT HOME

Edited by Gertrude J. Williams and John Money

The book begins with a historical perspective on the belated recognition of the problem of child abuse. It is followed by a chronicle of the overt and covert social sanctions for violence against children. Attention is given to the most widely investigated topic in the field — the characteristics of abusive parents — and to a topic little studied before — the characteristics of the victims that put them at risk for abuse. One section is devoted solely to the newly recognised syndrome of abuse dwarfism, which indicates that a child's growth may be stunted until he or she is removed to another environment. Other articles bring together information about the loss of IQ points and the resumption of intellectual growth after a child is no longer abused. 592 pages, £18.00

THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY PRESS
Ely House, 37 Dover Street, London W1X 4HQ

Helen McNeil

Last Word

The Sum of Things by OLIVIA MANNING *Weidenfeld* £5.95

The Sum of Things might have looked like a different novel if Olivia Manning hadn't died this summer. With the prospect of more novels to come, this concluding volume of her Levant Trilogy might have seemed mainly about adjustment, compromise, experience. The trilogy ends, as it began, with Guy and Harriet Pringle (who were also the protagonists of Manning's Balkan Trilogy) continuing their contingent lives in Cairo during the second world war. Their lives must be contingent because, as Harriet realises, war is a special case of life: you have to do what you're told. The comings and goings of the North African campaign mimic and exaggerate Harriet's female powerlessness and ironically set off Guy's self-absorbed ebullience. Meanwhile other people are killed. *The Sum of Things* significantly ends in the midst of the war with only local victories.

Now, since *The Sum of Things* must stand as the last novel in Olivia Manning's long and well-used career, it is still about contingent manouevres, but it is also, powerfully, about duration. In Manning's humane irony all events in life are radiantly fresh, but they are over quickly, their fulness is never quite used, and they never yield the knowledge which they tantalisingly might give if one knew where to look. So life continues until it is sliced off by death. Olivia Manning has managed to write that modern rarity, a philosophical novel formed entirely out of fragments of felt life. In *The Sum of Things* everything happens through people, even though the flares and barrages of history have put these people where they are. The rich filth of Cairo and the overpowering desert landscape are always seen by someone, often by Harriet, who comes closest to being Manning's mouthpiece, but also by others, including the youthful soldier Simon Boulderstone, whose recuperation into banal maturity forms one of the sub-plots.

The Sum of Things is a novel of incomplete recognitions. Vaguely trying, and equally vaguely failing, to understand, is the mark of a serious Manning character. The failure is almost always not recognized by the character and is usually not underlined by authorial comment; otherwise life couldn't go on. Beyond the more fully alive characters are the Egyptians, whose unstressed but repeatedly described object-status adds up to Manning's cold-eyed critique of the colonial world-view:

> As the heat slackened, a safragi came to pull back the jalousies and they could watch for the pyramid on the western horizon. When it became dark, th safragi returned to open the windows and admi the evening air.
> It was a pleasant routine but on the night tha Italy surrendered there was a disturbing break.

In the expatriate microcosm, the 'break' is th ill-health of the passive poet Castlebar. He ha contracted typhoid, which his lover Angela whose young son had died partly through he neglect, treats solicitously by offering him nic excursions, extra sex, ice-water and aspiri until he dies.

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Whatever Harriet, Guy, Angela, and Castlebar can learn and whatever they can feel for each other doesn't begin to free them from what Manning, in an earlier volume, called 'the bewildering inexpedience of life'. Life, however, isn't experienced as a trap. The sheer sensation of being young and alive in wartime is so strong that *The Sum of Things* reads like a thriller, in spite of what is at times a fairly sluggish plot. You want to know what will happen to these people. For the new reader, *The Sum of Things* functions as an independent novel. For other readers, the curiosity built up through *The Danger Tree* and *The Battle Lost and Won* is pleasurably resolved.

All the major characters except Simon turn out to have extra resources, even if, as in life, explanations are few. Manning makes characters drift in and out of focus without precisely clarifying their dramatic or thematic function for the whole trilogy because they have an experiential function here and now. After suddenly changing her mind about boarding an evacuation ship, Harriet heads for Damsascus partly because she thinks handsome, troubled Aidan Pratt is stationed there but when she arrives, he's been sent to Cairo: there's no meeting, no affair. I resented this bad timing. But Harriet's deeper impulse has been to disobey Guy and live her own life for once. Later Aidan kills himself, partly because he thinks Harriet has died on the torpedoed evacuation ship, but mainly, impenetrably, because he would have done so anyway. Though Manning, with her usual tact, doesn't say so, the point is that through nobody's fault, even the most fascinating and promising friend may turn out to have a fate elsewhere.

Olivia Manning's best novels take place out of England. The Balkan Trilogy and the Levant Trilogy are set during the second world war in Bulgaria, Greece, Egypt, Syria and Palestine, all underused by novelists. Because she has resisted Durellesque exoticism, these settings give Manning's realism its characteristic combination of distance and ordinariness. In the Levant Trilogy's brilliant battle scenes, life's natural incoherence accelerates into a terrifying but supernaturally purposive chaos. In Manning's foreign settings each detail is special, so it can be presented economically, then met with again. Conversely the predictability of friends and lovers takes on a supportive familiarity. Castlebar will always stand up his pack of cigarettes so that the next one is near at hand.

Being in wartime Cairo makes Guy and Harriet's young married life extraordinary, but what is being condensed and intensified is ordinary life. In the central irony of *The Sum of Things*, Guy thinks that Harriet is dead. Meanwhile she is having an existential vacation in Syria and Palestine. While Harriet is 'dead', Guy realises how unhappy he had made her. When by a Levantine miracle (precipitated by a travesty-miracle in the Holy Sepulchre), Harriet is restored to him, Guy's recognitions evaporate. 'Harriet was safely back and so there was no reason why life should not resume its everyday order.' Extrovert Guy bursts into tears but a few hours later he's too busy to take Harriet to dinner. 'Defeated by his belief in his own reasonableness', Harriet quietly goes to the Semiramis Suite with Angela and Castlebar. The story continues, as most lives do, quietly and unpeacefully, with the important things never getting enough stress. Olivia Manning picked a good note on which to end.

Andrew Motion

Some New Strain

Why Brownlee Left by PAUL MULDOON
Faber £3.00
The Morning of the Poem by JAMES SCHUYLER
Faber/Farrar, Straus & Giroux £5.50
The Changing Problem by IAN MCMILLAN
Carcanet £2.95
Constantly Singing by JAMES SIMMONS
Blackstaff Press £3.95

Why Brownlee Left is Paul Muldoon's third book, and like its predecessors is written in a style which aspires to the condition of clear glass. There are no outbursts of recherché language, and no strong rhetorical gestures. Just plain phrases and conversational cadences. The result is to make his poetry look simple — child-like, even, at times. Children themselves make a significantly large number of appearances in his work, but even when not actually present, their wide-eyed straightforwardness is recreated. In 'October 1950', for instance:

> Whatever it is, it all comes down to this:
> My father's cock
> Between my mother's thighs.
> Might he have forgotten to wind the clock?

For all its lack of ornament — Shandyan reference notwithstanding — this child-begetting poem suggests that Muldoon's simplicity isn't quite what it seems. Typically, we look straight through his unclouded language, and are made to concentrate on oddities and difficulties in the actual situation he describes. What is 'it', exactly? And if it does 'all' come down to 'My father's cock/Between my mother's thighs', is such an opinion reductive? Can it avoid being written off by the self-irony it generates? Throughout *Why Brownlee Left* Muldoon resists complexities of diction in order to cultivate them in other such — usually narrative — terms. And since the book contains a larger number of story-poems than *New Weather* or *Mules*, it is proportionately more absorbing.

There are, though, obvious dangers in this method, and Muldoon doesn't always escape them. The most serious are caused by a kind of excessive refinement, which suffocates narrative resonances at birth. The short poem 'Ireland' is a case in point:

> The Volkswagen parked in the gap,
> But gently ticking over.
> You wonder if it's lovers
> And not men hurrying back
> Across two fields and a river.

Here what is meant to be glancingly evocative merely sounds rather coyly 'significant'. But while a number of other poems ('Bran', for example, or 'The Avenue') suppress their potential subtleties in a similar manner, Mul-

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doon invariably manages to prevent his reserve from becoming evasion. At his best he often writes like a miniaturised Robert Frost, and since so many of his characters are poised on the edge of action, rather than being fully involved in it, his intriguingly suggestive language is entirely appropriate. Like Brownlee's horses, his lines are constantly 'Shifting their weight from foot to/Foot, and gazing into the future'.

The book's preoccupation with imminence is most memorably treated in the final long (10 page) poem 'Immram'.

To start with, the narrator, who is told 'Your old man was an asshole./That makes an ass-hole out of you', reflects that 'My grandfather hailed from New York State./My grand-moster was part Cree./This must be some new strain in my pedigree', and then spends the rest of the poem searching for his father. It is, in fact, a pilgrimage — and one in which the journey is just as important as the arrival. After enquiring at the Atlanta Club, his suicidal mother's house, another club, the police station, and finally the Park Hotel, he is granted only the most cryptic interview with the fater-figure.

> 'I forgive you', he croaked. 'And I forget.
> On your way out, you tell that bastard
> To bring me a dish of ice-cream.
> I want Baskin-Robbins banana-nut ice-cream.'

In a sense, sketching the plot of 'Immram' does it a disservice. The poem's most abiding fascinations are the shifts between fact and fiction, and clear sight and hallucination. The form is skilfully maintained throughout, and so is the tone. It's as if Raymond Chandler had recast a chunk of Coleridge's notebooks — and the result is much the best poem Muldoon has written.

James Schuyler is also interested in plain language — but for other reasons and to very different effects.

Like Frank O'Hara and John Ashbery, Schuyler started life as a poet in the New York School, and has always sought to make a virtue of observing random details and attitudes as simply as possible. Hence this sort of thing: 'I'd like to go out/for a swim but/it's a little cool for that. Enough to/sit here drinking coffee,/writing, watching the clear/day ripen (such/a rainy June we had)/while Jane and Joe/sleep in their room/and John in his. I/think I'll make more toast.'

The point of this style is that it transforms nothing. And that, as Schuyler must be fed up with hearing, is also its problem. Sentimentality, mawkishness, stupidity and boastfulness are all writ large — so much so that they dwarf the occasional intelligent remark or moment of lyrical intensity. But the consequence is not only pulverising boredom for the reader — particularly in the 60-page title poem. It's also frustration for the writer. The ostensible purpose of concentrating on the quotidian is 'to say, to see and say, things/as they are'. But in practice every 'thing' he sees is mutilated and crushed by the remorseless subjectivity he brings to bear on it.

Ian McMillan is much more guarded. The very considerable strengths of his first collection, *The Changing Problem*, almost all derive from strategies designed to keep himself at an objective distance from his subject. Jokes of various kinds and neo-Martian perceptions are the most common — as in the title poem (which punningly refers to campanology), or in one about a milkman called 'Unreal to Your Doorstep Daily':

> The rising sun gleams on his angled skull
> lighting a standing circle of electric
> Co-op milk wagons, lifted into almost
> forgotten
> set places. What a strange high priest,
> holding a pound of butter straight to the sky.

When McMillan speaks openly about himself — as he does in a handful of love poems — he's not always able to avoid toppling into sentimentality. But his more extrovert pieces indicate that he's already discovered the advantages of making objects embody his feelings.

The quirkiness with which he perceives them isn't simply a matter of amusement. It's a tacit but persistent admission of isolation from the world about him. As one might expect, other people make only rare appearances in his work, and when they do — in 'Madmen on Ferries', for instance — they are made remote by their peculiarities:

> Strange Philippa runs up and down the jetty
> looking for her lost fisherman,
> while I point out a seal to no one listening
> which disappears as soon as my eyes are
> turned.

James Simmons has always been a straight-talker, but unlike Muldoon — a fellow Northern Irishman — he usually lets his directness remain what it seems. The most successful pieces in his *Selected Poems* (1978) report on life in and around Belfast with compelling bleakness. 'Claudy' is an obvious example.

Increasingly, however, he's been drawn away from the politics of streets and states to those of the family, and his new collection, *Constantly Singing*, is dominated by what he calls 'natural forces,/marriages, divorces'. As before, he works with impressive formal energy, and his awkwardly honest self-criticism is unquestionable. He says himself:

> The critic, Mrs Longley, was to write
> years after,
> 'He must have very large
> illusions.' By God she was right.

But it's hard not to feel, by the end of the book, that his subject has got the upper hand. Partly because of the great frequency with which he evokes a culture of whisky and knickers, and partly because his imagination often seems in thrall to the painful details of domestic distress.

Among this week's contributors:

RAYNER HEPPENSTALL's last novel was *Two Moons.*

HELEN MCNEIL lectures in American Studies at the university of East Anglia.

MARGARETTA D'ARCY is co-author of *The Non-Stop Connolly Show* and other plays.

ANDREW MOTION's book on Edward Thomas will be published by Routledge later this year.

STEPHEN BROOK works as an editor and writer.

JUDY COOKE has published a number of short stories and a novel *New Road.*

KEN COATES has just published *Trade Unions in Britain* with Tony Topham (Spokesman Books).

TIM MASON teaches Modern History at Oxford and is an editor of History Workshop.

J.J. WHITE is Reader in German at King's College, London, and is working on a study of literature and futurism.

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Stephen Brook

Setting Murder to Poetry

Deliberate Regression by ROBERT HARBISON *Deutsch* £8.95

Three years ago, in a remarkable book called *Eccentric Spaces*, Robert Harbison examined how the imagination responded to the spaces it observed and created: gardens, maps, museums, and so forth. The book was as brilliant, and eccentric as its theme. Rather than an argument, it presented journeys down countless paths. If there was an aimless quality to it all, there was also a luminous delight in the book and a startling originality.

In his new book, *Deliberate Regression*, Harbison, as if redressing the balance, presents an argument on the grandest scale: that Romanticism's worship of the individual led through its own extremes to a destructive betrayal of the individual:

> The furthest excess of Romantic individualism is to recreate a god in the self out of just those parts beyond one's conscious control, so the unconscious and ungovernable is elevated as the true beyond, the highest part of the individual no longer individual.

This is more than an aesthetic issue. Harbison sees a connection between the artist's dismissal of 'the boundaries of thought' (reason) and a political dismissal of the individual:

> The coincidence must have a meaning, the fact that the destruction of man in art just preceded his extermination in fenced compounds.

Coincidences, however, need not have a meaning. Harbison states his theme at the outset. What is surprising is his method of pursuing it. Here is no magisterial survey of Romantic art and ideology. As one could predict from *Eccentric Spaces*, he analyses examples that are many and various. They form a fascinating, sometimes bewildering, gallery: Boucher, Blake, Runge, Ruskin, Burne-Jones, Malinowski, Lévi-Strauss, Kandinsky — and many others.

Such a list suggests an eclecticism on a grand scale, which is both a weakness and, more importantly, a strength. At times Harbison's observations seem not so much orchestrations of his theme as igenious cadenzas on it. This does occasionally irritate, yet his seeming looseness of methodological rigour is more than made up for by the extra-ordinary suggestiveness and freshness of what he has to say. His comments on Ruskin's rules relating to the nature of Gothic could almost be applied to himself:

> His rules are not galling because like Blake's they are always unruly, issuing from love of paradox so strong and generating such floods of contradiction they appeal first of all to the restiveness in any mind and most deeply to the most restive.

Harbison notes how Victorian revivalists sought to re-forge the links between art and religion long after the chain had rusted ('thereby appearing to undo a large stretch of history'). The crucial figure in such an argument must be Wagner, whom Harbison first mentions as he considers Morris's reworkings of Norse sagas. Morris

> saw the sagas as offering a chance to escape from enthralment to the supernatural into the purely human. Wagner, a non-believer, constructed of old stories a new oppression, embodied in a flood of sound which asked submission.

Later in the book Wagner is again taken up, and in greater detail. The listener to *Parsifal*, says Harbison, is required not only to absorb the music but to participate in a communion rite that renders literal the connection between bleeding and eating. It is, I think, true that Wagner requires us, even compels us, to accept a vision that is inescapably extreme. Further, it is a communal experience that is exalted.

The solitary Parsifal closes Amfortas's wound and, as Harbison observes, thereby reopens those of Christ, and the opera ends serenely with the Sacrament motif. If *Parsifal* can be experienced as simultaneously deeply moving and deeply bogus, this is in part because Wagner too is guilty of the 'religious' antiquarianism that makes Pugin and Burges suspect in Harbison's eyes. But the argument is not pursued and Harbison moves on, reasonably enough, to Nietzsche.

So often, then, this book is like a banquet of *hors d'oeuvres*: the palate is titillated, the appetite whetted but left unsatisfied. Harbison's omnivorousness leads him to glide rather too rapidly past the specimen cabinets. This selectivity works far better in the case of Lawrence. Harbison chooses to examine that resplendent and very nasty novel *The Plumed Serpent*:

> All the symbolism in *The Plumed Serpent* leads to an anti-symbolism of death and night . . . and true community is fulfilled in horrors because it accepts everything without doubting itself . . . Setting murder to poetry has not dignified murder but brought imagination into disrepute.

The connection between poetry and murder is central to the final chapters, where Harbison looks at Nazism and Stalinism. It is not difficult to show that the depersonalisation of art that characterised those eras had roots in the Grimms' identification of culture with 'a specific national language and finally with race', in Malevich's 'Utopian scientism', in the gigantism of Hitler's architectural fantasies.

Yet the excesses of Romantic individualism are only one factor in the uneasy relationship between the artist and the all-powerful state that requires the artist's service in the pursuit of 'larger' goals, be they racial, economic or social. It is hard to quarrel with Harbison's observations; they are all pertinent, yet his case is sketched rather than proved in these final chapters.

For all one's reservations, it must still be said that even when one disagrees, this book offers more intellectual nourishment than a shelf-full of more conventional academic studies. The issues raised are important, and the arguments startle and stimulate. What lingers in the mind is the freshness and fertility of Harbison's vision. He sees and reads brilliantly, and he writes superbly. In an age when criticism is increasingly in the hands of jargon-ridden academics with little to say, it is a joy to welcome this dazzling, strange, bewildering, provocative book by someone with too much to say.

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Selected Autumn and Winter Books

The books listed below are a selection from those which the publishers hope to issue between now and mid-March. Some prices are provisional, some are not yet known.

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RONALD SEARLE The King of Beasts and Other Creatures *Allen Lane* £5.95

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she was concerned, of course, with social security — until February of 1975, when Mr Benn is found moving the Second Reading of his Industry Act, providing (major change or not) for wholly optional agreements. These, he says cheerily in his speech, are 'designed' to cover 100 or 150 firms. On 19 May we are back to Liaison Committee discussions between Cabinet, TUC and Parliamentary Labour Party. Planning agreements are celebrated by Ian Mikardo, paladin of the back benches, as (for instance) a means of solving British Leyland's problems (identified, seemingly, as a shortage of spares, and nothing to do with the quality of its cars). But, said Mikardo 'in cold fury', these noble agreements were suffering 'emasculation' because the passage of the Industry Bill through committee stage was endorsing their voluntary character.

Mr Kaufman's advisory tract on ministerial technique provides a quite different resonance for all this sound and fury. His enemies on the left may question his claim to have 'entered the Department of Industry in June 1975 full of zest to implement the whole of Labour's industrial strategy', but it was surely reasonable for someone whose previous involvement had been with housing to feel 'a little rusty' on industrial matters. He therefore asked if he could have, on paper, a definition of a planning agreement.

> Nothing happened. In the 15 months during which Labour had held office with a commitment to introduce planning agreements, nobody seemed to have sat down and worked out what should actually go into a planning agreement, even though a Bill . . . was at that very moment before Parliament.

Planning agreements, of course, are scarcely esoteric devices: they have been long employed by French governments with scarcely a socialist corpuscle in their blood-line. It is remarkable, therefore, that the leaders of the party had not been able to summon up a definition: still more remarkable that they should have chosen to belabour each other over something whose nature must have been quite indistinct to them.

Sadly, the rest of the story is soon told. The idea of applying compulsion to firms was canvassed again by the NEC in July 1975; by February 1976 a Cabinet Committee paper had grasped the fact that the unions would prefer to hang loose (agreements to restructure industry, after all, might seriously limit bargaining liberty) and by March Denis Healey and Eric Varley (Tony Benn's successor at Industry) have bluntly described the cause as 'hopeless'. The great post-Keynesian initiative comes down, in Mrs Castle's sad words, to a 'damp squib'. Only one planning agreement was ever signed, by her count: and it was with the US-based Chrysler management, who of course would have signed the Communist Manifesto to shuffle off onto the government the responsibility for their collapsing British subsidiary (now taken over by Peugeot). Kaufman, actually, points out that there was one other signatory: the National Coal Board.

AS A RECORD of fact, and as evidence relating to the character and abilities of the survivors who aspire to lead Labour, how good are the diaries? Mrs Castle's method was to type them up at the end of each day's events, or as near as possible afterwards. Most

reporters will probably agree that this is an intrinsically more reliable method than Crossman's habit of dictating to a tape-recorder. And scarcely anyone who knows her imagines Barbara Castle practising wholesale deceit (the same cannot be said of Richard Crossman, which doesn't invalidate his diaries as a historical document, but does give the user an occasional sense of vertigo).

Though she identifies her vision as 'the gentle society', it wouldn't do to peg her as an old softy. Good hatred is focused on anyone who has done her conspicuously down, so that evidence against James Callaghan, victor in the late-sixties battle of union legislation, requires some aiming-off. 'Bland' is about the top award he gets. No-one emerges with a better personal character than Michael Foot — loyalty allowed with honesty — or indeed with a better political character, as calibrated by those who cherish 'moderation' — something amazing only to those who once accepted the media demonology, and leaves for resolution only the question of how much Foot's acceptance of that role was voluntary. Chiefly, her warmth is for the personal left of the 'Husbands and Wives' dinners, cosily emplaced in a private room at Locket's — Foot, John Silkin, Judith Hart, Peter Shore and, intermittently, Tony Benn. But evidence of malice would not be readily found in any part of the record. Her sympathies include a wondrous non-partisan booze-up invented by Sir John Langford-Holt to mark the 30th anniversary of the 1945 intake. The good in Roy Jenkins is visible to her, and her conviction that Harold Lever is a 'Trojan horse' of capitalism never prevents her feeding him Polo mints and being solicitous for his health.

Character is not obscured here by Crossman's acrid cynicism, or the rapt self-absorption of the Wilson memoirs. There is, in her phrase, 'an exuberance of egos'. but the bill drawn, surely with truth, is of commonly-decent people trying to do some limited best on behalf of some hazily defined entity called 'the country'. 'Limited', however, is the truly applicable epithet: although Mrs Castle's initial belief was that 1974 might begin 'the most successful Labour government in history', her narrative confirms what many outsiders suspected from the first, namely that the government had little prospect of escaping the political and intellectual paralysis which gripped its predecessor in 1964-70. The enemy was identical, but learning-behavour scarcely visible:

> 14 March . . . This is our third Cabinet, but public expenditure is already rearing its ugly head. Denis (Healey, Chancellor) had put in a memo saying that the economic situation the country faced was possibly the worst we had ever faced in peacetime . . .

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There was no scope for a rise in living-standards: there must be nationalised-industry price-hikes, a general standstill on public spending, and a review of 'prestige projects'.

Throughout the Castle diaries, Denis Healey appears as straightforward, often conciliatory in ways his manner wouldn't suggest — and wholly respectful of the pieties trundled forth by his department. The nimble, unorthodox intellect of Denis Healey has been celebrated in Fleet Street's song and story as thoroughly as was (once) the icy Jacobinism of Michael Foot: yet his own text in *Healey's Eye* squares better with the Castle version. Healey on aesthetics and photography is as unsurprising (if far less damaging) as Healey on economics: 'As befits the island where Aphrodite was born from the foam, Cyprus is a lovely place.'

Civilised cultural orthodoxy is hardly something to deplore in a politician — what's faulty is the culture within which reviewers portray it as Leonardoesque sensibility, thus implying a Yahoo norm either in Fleet Street or Westminster (I know where I'd look). But when *Healey's Eye* proceeds from aesthetics to politics, civilised orthodoxy declines into mental stasis. Politics (in which 'a good brain' becomes handy) is defined wholly in terms of administration, and somewhat worn-out ones at that.

First, one uses one's skills and judgment (assumed to be exceptional) to 'decide what should be done'. Then, 'assuming you know what should be done and how to do it', further skills — those of persuasion — come into play. But the particular nature of politics is that it is often necessary 'to be content with acquiesence rather than understanding'.

HEALEY DISPLAYS no conception of politics as a dialectical process — as an interaction between ruler and ruled, where the whole art consists in trying to replace acquiesence with understanding. Understanding, though admittedly a rather wayward creature, will develop a life of its own: acquiesence requires tutelage through its whole lacklustre existence. In the administrative delusion, which is scarcely unique to Healey, one perhaps touches the core of Labour's failure: its inability to change the world, and the consequent obsession of its leaders with power and compulsion.

When Peter Shore argues, in effect, that the lesson of recent years is that the state needs more power, one understands the frustration which lies behind the argument. Electorally, of course, it might well be somewhat dangerous to request further powers from an electorate which grows regularly more sceptical of Whitehall's capacity to make sensible use of the powers it already has.

The state under Labour did not lack power, or anyway was not so lacking in power as to be an explanation for Labour's failure. Planning agreements did not fail because of lack of legislative capacity: they failed for lack of any political dialectic within the Labour movement, such as might have transformed them from an electoral gimmick into a definable proposition.

Tony Benn's achievement is to have been the first Labour leader of substance to break with the administrative model — publicly at least. He describes, in outline only, a politics in which the business becomes one of mobilising understanding. The question is over the completeness of the break: or perhaps over its motivation. So far,the evidence suggests that Benn inhabits two worlds, and his supporters' worst possible disservice now would be to allow him to move at his own convenience between them.

Textual comparison, again, is helpful: for instance, between the Concorde story as told in the Castle diaries, and the Concorde story as told in *Tony Benn: A Political Biography*, which is a portrait composed largely through the co-operation of the subject. Concorde, in Benn's account, represents a formidable triumph of open government — not, in view of Concorde's commercial performance, an endorsement likely to assist the cause. But is it, in any case, true?

When Labour reached office in 1974, Concorde was one of the 'prestige' projects which was threatened by Denis Healey's Treasury-inspired gloom over public spending: its survival has cost, since then, the equivalent of much medical and educational equipment. Benn's account is that the civil servants wanted to kill it.

> So I took it to (Cabinet) colleagues and I said: 'Well, if the case is as bad as this, the figures as bad as this, let's publish them. Then at any rate there will be some public understanding of the reasons for the cancellation.'

The stance is that of a man striving to promote a disinterested dialogue, yet Castle's account of the meeting is that Benn's objective (successfully achieved) was merely to stave off decision, and 'live to fight another day'. In the meantime, on his biographer's account, he 'was not afraid' to encourage Concorde workers from his constituency to demonstrate in Downing Street while his colleagues considered the matter. There is no record of a public consultation on Concorde except with interested parties, and Concorde survived as a 16-aircraft programme by means of a series of Cabinet delaying-actions. On 27 June 1974

> we turned to Concorde. Wedgie never gives up and Elwyn (Jones) reported that he was now trying to by-pass Cabinet's previous decision, maintaining that a number of events had now put cancellation out of the question . . .

The irony of Labour's position is that its one political spokesman who has a serious rank-and-file reputation for advocating an open, dialectical political process has at the same time an almost unequalled reputation among the political leadership for practising government by manipulation. No doubt some such crisis of understanding is bound to afflict a party which faces the need to alter the practices of many years: it is, nonetheless, one which will destroy Labour's prospects if it cannot be resolved.

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Judy Cooke

Be a Good Boy

Joshua Then And Now by MORDECAL RICHLER *Macmillan* £6.95

Joshua Then and Now is a very funny book, Richler's first novel for nine years and one that puts him at the top of the Oy Vey League. It's about being Jewish, radical and middle-aged, with a nostalgia for past idealism and an ironic awareness of present compromise. It introduces the reader to a whole generation of Joshuas, to the Hebes making it in Montreal, changing their names from Kugelman to Cope and the English *literati* marching against Suez before putting in for tea at the Ritz. The locations range from Cambridge in the Fifties to Hollywood in the Seventies and the cast list is long and varied.

Reuben and Esther Shapiro take top billing (Joshua's parents, possessed of a Dickensian energy and charm) and after them come, a string of memorable eccentrics. Jack and Jane Trimble, jowly and randy respectively, leaders of the Westmount summer saturnalias; Markham Murdoch, drunken English author, losing his Girton girl to Joshua then, looking to him for rescue now; Seymour Kaplan, 'that Machiavelli among adulterers'; Senator Hornby, gentleman, clubman, father of lovely Pauline, the *shiksa* sexy above all others, who is destined to become Joshua's wife.

This ebullient creation of character is matched by a skilful narrative in which the hero's predicament — catastrophic in all respects — is set against his past experience. Joshua Now is a highly successful TV journalist, a puller of glittering prizes. Joshua Then was a bright lad who adored his ex-boxer of a father and took to heart paternal instruction on 'fucking and the Jewish tradition' with its extension into biblical exegesis. 'The Book of Job is more than just another gambling story with a happy end. It has a moral.' For Reuben Shapiro, religious observance had to be modified by a certain social caution, as when he took his son to the synagogue at Yom Kippur, spotted Dr Orbach the dentist ahead of them, prayer shawl at the ready, arm in a sling and suddenly announced a change of plan: they'd go to the movies instead. 'During the Days of Awe?' 'Yeah. Right.' Bessie Orbach, the dentist's daughter, was the one who enlightened Joshua, greeting him on a first and only date with shocked recognition. 'Aren't you the criminal's son?' Turns out it was Teuben, acting on orders from his boss Colucci, who put Orbach's arm in the sling; finger breaking, no less, something to do with gambling debts. Esther could be embarrassing, too, in her own way. She entertained the fellows at Joshua's barmitzvah with a striptease, then addressed her goggle-eyed audience. 'Now I want everybody who got a hard-on watching my act to be a good boy and put up his hand.'

With these two behind him, Joshua is bound to make it to the big time. That proves to be the easy part; the difficulties begin when he finds himself free of any definition other than his own. He becomes unsettled and argumentative; he leaves his family to make a pilgrimage into the past and retraces his steps to Ibiza because he was once defeated there. He visited the place in his twenties, an aspiring writer, a Canadian Jew needing to confront Europe and its memories of oppression. He had wandered through Madrid, seen the stones on which the Inquisition burnt Jews for sport and told himself to forget it. 'Don't be a grudgy type.' He had encountered the perfect antagonist, Dr Mueller, a fascist pure and simple and been worsted in the contest, outsmarted in a sexual scandal, made to leave. Now a seasoned warrior, Joshua returns to take revenge and the consequences in terms of his own suffering are worse than anything he could have imagined. Perhaps it is time for him to accept Reuben's reading of the New Testament. 'If a guy is ever going to shit on you he usually leads with a quote from it . . . the dirtier the sin, the sweeter the saying. The New Testament covers everything. I recommend it.'

No half measures, then, for Joshua and none in the comic invention of his creator. Richler is out to amuse; at the same time he invites our serious consideration of that widespread phenomenon, the left in disarray. Auden is his mentor. He ponders on post-war Germany and pre-war Spain, wryly notes his own lack of commitment and laments the fact that many of his early idols (Osborne, for one) have feet of clay. Jericho may have fallen but there are plenty more battles up ahead.

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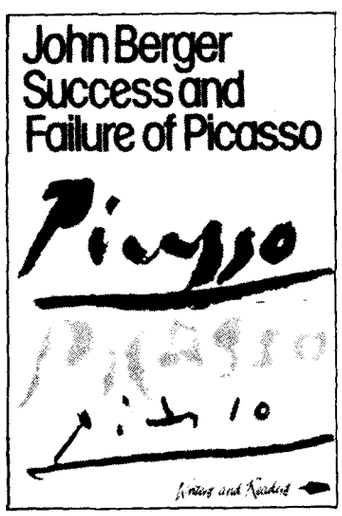

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Ken Coates

Bread of Heaven

The Fed by HYWEL FRANCIS & DAVID SMITH *Lawrence & Wishart* £12.95

'When the miners were striking in 1926,' wrote Nye Bevan in his vivid and still relevant little book *In Place of Fear*,

> a great many people were moved to listen to their case. Certain high ecclesiastical dignatories even went so far as to offer to mediate . . . Their efforts failed. The miners were beaten and driven back to work under disgraceful conditions. For years these conditions continued. But were those high Church dignitaries moved to intervene then? Not at all. For them the problem was solved. It had never consisted in the suffering of the miners, but in the fact that the miners were still able to struggle . . . Silent pain evokes no response.

Yet the struggles of the South Wales Miners' Federation (The 'Fed') continued through all the years of official absentmindedness. Punishing blacklists, speed-up and killing new forms of mechanisation all failed to tame the quite extraordinary spirit of the Welsh miners. On St. David's Day 1927, 52 miners died in an explosion at Marine Colliery, near Ebbw Vale. When the Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, arrived on the scene to bring condolences, he was cried down with shouts of 'murderer'. The local Labour MP condemned the 'irresponsible youths' who were, he said 'responsible'. One of these replied:

> I am one of those irresponsible youths, who did a little rescue work: on Tuesday, four hours; on Wednesday morning, six hours; Wednesday night, seven and a half hours. We knew nothing of Baldwin's visit until the police tried to prevent our boarding the lorry which was to take us home, because we were between Stanley and the cameras.

The MP was subsequently rejected by the miners. But meantime the enquiry found the explosion to have been an 'Act of God', in spite of evidence from the mineworkers that the colliery had harboured huge gas accumulations, and provided no adequate ventilation. In 1927, pain was silent because there was no one to hear. But the men learnt their lesson and began, in the words of these historians 'to rebuild the Federation from its base'. *The Fed* is the story of this effort, a story which jumps out of the conventional mould of trade union history, with its traditional accounts of long forgotten infighting between caucuses, its scent of musty minute-books. In this gem of a book, Hywel Francis and David Smith have caught every nuance of the torments of an age of crushing unemployment, which freed the rapacity of the coal-owners from any semblance of restraint. 'Managers' men' on the pit committees provided the owners with a spy network which could sometimes forestall those who wished to resist to go underground even in what was left of their own organization. Nonetheless, trade unionism fought back.

And how it fought! Against systematic victimisation, intimidation and corrosive poverty, the Fed deployed only an organized intelligence. Yet the result was electrifying. The

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hunger marches, at first based narrowly on the communists, but later widening out into a genuinely common cause, combined a meticulous capacity for detail with a lethal strategic sweep. Here are some of the instructions to the February 1934 contingents:

> Marchers found soiling seats of lavatories, etc. will be expelled from the march. There is ample lavatory accommodation and each marcher should pull the chain after him . . . No gambling will be allowed for fags or anything else, because the losers become disgruntled when they have no smokes.

No one complained, and all accepted the rules. As the protest mounted, local demonstrations followed the national ones — 300,000 people came onto the streets of South Wales at the height of the subsequent winter. When processions failed, a spontaneous rebellion broke out in Merthyr. Angry demonstrators went to the Unemployment Assistance Board and destroyed its records. The next day the Government reversed its policy on benefit scales: it was a great victory, the only time in the 1930s when direct action caused a Government to change its course and capitulate to demands from outside Parliament.

But next there were the sit-ins, in which pit after pit was occupied and thousands of men were to stay below ground until they had established their rights to organise themselves, in the union of their own choice, and to exclude the creature company union. Everyone outside was mobilised to help. Men finally came out into the daylight with their sight permanently impaired, worn out but unbreakable. Jim Griffiths describes one such sortie:

> The days below had left their mark; the elderly looked weary — the young had grown beards. I was greeted by the 'patriarch' who had opened and closed each day with prayer, and in between had transformed the staydown miners into a choir. The leader escorted me to a platform . . . they listened . . . intently as I announced the terms of the settlement . . . then the . . . vote . . . It was one of the proudest moments of my life when every lamp was raised. We sang 'Bread of Heaven'. This was the bread they could not deny us.

A great part of the fascination of this history comes from its authentic recollections of the people who were involved in its events. Hywel Francis and David Smith have responded to the silent pain of their forebears, and caught for us the hopes of a no longer forgotten people.

J. J. White

Eye-Cellation

The Egghead Republic by ARNO SCHMIDT *Marion Boyars* £5.95.
Evening Edged in Gold by ARNO SCHMIDT *Marion boyars (£50 until 1 January 1981, afterwards £60).*

In 2008, long after the nuclear obliteration of Europe, Charles Winer, the hero of Schmidt's *Egghead Republic*, embarks on a fact-finding mission to two of the world's most restricted areas. The Interworld Powers have granted him permission to cross the Hominid Zone, a no-man's-land where mutants, half human and half animal, roam in controlled reservations, and to visit the 'Egghead Republic', an artificial floating island on which intellectuals from all eight major powers spend ostensibly creative sabbaticals.

However, it is clear from the treacherous advice given about how to survive in the Zone and from the defective equipment issued to him that Winer is not meant to come back alive; if he dies out there, the secrets of the International Republic for Artists and Scientists (IRAS) will remain intact. Even after bringing back his vivid account of life among the hominids and on IRAS, Winer is still ultimately outwitted by the authorities. For he is forced to have his report, i.e. the text of Schmidt's novel, translated by a bigoted pedant into a dead language (German), thus effectively insulating its findings from the world at large. *The Egghead Republic* charts the cat-and-mouse game played by Winer and the authorities. And in so doing it adds up to a hard-hitting cautionary tale reflecting the Cold War mood of the Fifties when it was conceived and offering as much a satire of contemporary lunacies as a piece of genuine science-fiction.

What are the Great Powers so anxious to hush up? That the cruelly-abused mutants have retained the feelings of humans — indeed, that their world is still Arcadia compared with the police states of 2008? That IRAS, far from being the desired extraterritorial 'Floating Parnassus', has become a microcosm of the power struggles taking place elsewhere? That it is even undertaking experiments in biological engineering that make the earlier nuclear mutations seem innocuous by comparison? The Interworld Powers certainly have all these skeletons in their cupboard, and more besides. But opposition to Winer essentially stems from the fact that he is all that they are not: cultured, subtle, humorous, full-blooded to the point of randiness, fundamentally a man of perception and moral integrity. As such he represents a threat to the system. And his report, a document rich in cultural reflections and linguistic inventiveness and expressing a warmth of feeling for life, in fact something closer to the spirit of the classical 'Gelehrtenrepublik' ideal, remains a dangerous monument to individual resilience. While there are Winers, there is hope, it would seem.

Almost 20 years separate the original German publication of *The Egghead Republic* from *Evening Edged in Gold*. And even if these two works do not represent Schmidt at his best, they give a good indication of the radical development his writing has undergone. Most noticeable are the technical changes. Even *The Egghead Republic* is in a markedly experimental prose, with clusters of phrases grouped in sense-units, innovative spelling and typography, neologisms and idiosyncratic punctuation; not, as might be supposed, the style of 2008, but an idiom Schmidt evolved for the amalgam of psychological impressionism and elliptical recall that characterised his early fiction.

Schmidt's even more radical last 'novel', however, resembles a cross between a script and a visual poem, frequently supplementing dialogue and stage-directions with long marginal quotations or illustrative material (plans, photos, cuttings), often splitting into two or more columns to suggest simultaneous events or create ironic justapositions à la Ann Quin, and faithfully reproducing Schmidt's typescript along with its crossings-out and addenda. The book's mammoth format allows space for such complex effects, and these, together with Schmidt's predilection for phonetic spellings and portmanteau words, require new reading habits in the way that a *Finnegans Wake* or a *Clockwork Orange* do.

Whereas *The Egghead Republic* was rich in incidents, from Winer's exhilarating copulation with a centaur to IRAS's cloak-and-dagger schemes, *Evening Edged in Gold* would appear to obey that unwritten law of modernism concerning the inverse ratio of surface action to technical experimentation. For during three days in 1974 we witness a somewhat improbable confrontation between a group of hippies en route to Tasmania and

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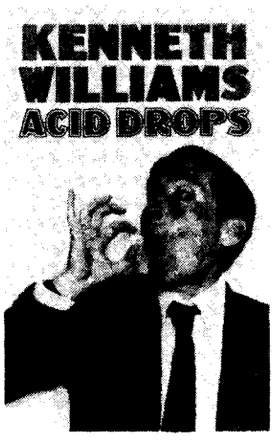

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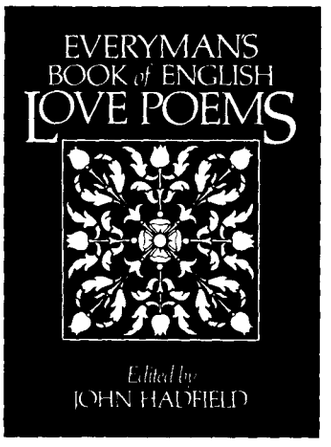

DENT

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members of a household in a North German village, in particular a trio of ageing intellectuals. There is much talking, predominantly about sex and literature, much copulating in various permutations and much voyeurism ('the usual eye-cellation of senior citizens').

But despite numerous couplings and the occasional sub-plot, the action is meagre for a long novel in dramatic form. True, strange things do occasionally take place, as when a character climbs into a painting and returns to 'our' world carrying some fruit from it, or eleswhere fragments into two selves for a while; or when a couple ascend into a town in the clouds. After all, the relationship between reality and fantasy is one of the book's chief concerns. But on the whole, talking, sheer verbal dexterity, remains the novel's backbone.

The language of *Evening Edged in Gold* is peppered with Schmidt's so-called 'etyms': words spelt inventively so as to bring out language's supposedly hidden level, in the case of these characters mainly a sexual one, though with an occasional chiliastic variant, for Schmidt, the 'arnotificer of many illusions', is much exercised by parallels between erotic and utopian fantasies. What the title calls 'Er$\frac{ra}{o}$ta' abound: 'roBust', 'whorendous look of knavelry', 'wombanly opinions', or more to the point, a pre-coital 'prepare yourself for the wurst'. Some are even expressed typographically: 'heavenly fan$\frac{ta}{n}$y', 'APOstle', 'Ma$\frac{mm}{nn}$a from heaven' and the title's 'C$\frac{ou}{u}$ntryside'. (The translator, John E. Woods, has made valiant efforts to find English equivalents, even if Schmidt's text has inevitably been creatively rewritten.)

Schmidt also carries this concern with levels of the psyche into his character-plotting, with two of the old men, Eugen and Egon, clearly functioning as alter egos to their companion and the whole novel capable of being read as an elaborate Freudian psychodrama. Moreover, on a mythical level, the love of A&O (Alpha and Omega) for Ann'Ev (an Eve) emerges as something closer to archetypal fairytale than surface reality. The interplay between life and fantasy becomes an anatomy of creativity as well as a postscript to getting old.

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Tim Mason

Scholtz-Klink

Hitler by NORMAN STONE *Hodder* £6.95
Hitler's Mein Kampf in Britain & America: A Publishing History 1930-39 by JAMES J. & PATIENCE BARNES *Cambridge* £8.50

Chat is that mode of discourse in which information and argument are subordinated to the imperatives of easy communication. Academic chat often strives after happy turns of phrase, quotability. Norman Stone has chatted a short book about Hitler. Stone's model, A. J. P. Taylor, has raised *talking* about history to the status of a minor and very popular art form. Simple economical prose, a sustained irreverence towards dead statesmen and living colleagues, a delight in *both* common-sense *and* paradox are combined, in the best of Taylor's writing/talking, with the court jester's urge to turn the world upside-down (*not for real, just in play*).

Stone's superfluous confection contains almost everything that is unpleasant in this distinctively English style of popularising. The impudence of his style would be monotonous, were it not so ineptly executed:

> Himmler's background was of a kind drearily familiar among Nazi leaders — Bavarian, with a stiff, uniformed father and a Scholtz-Klink of a mother, and a family socially pretentious but materially uneasy. Still, Himmler was such a freak that even this unappetizing pair can be excused of responsibility for warping him . . .

or this:

> Cranks who disliked make-up, dancing of the modern kind, 'decadent art' . . . and sexuality of all but the most orthodox kind, flocked to Hitler's banner.

Stone's stated aim is to summarise the professional historians' revisions of recent years. But the revisions which he singles out are either already widely publicised, or discredited (or both of these), or wrong. Neither Hitler's comfortable adolescence nor the unchannelled struggle for power among the executive agencies of the Third Reich need further popularisation. Taylor's view that Hitler did not take his own political ideas seriously and was just responding to opportunities in the push towards war, 1937-39, is re-hashed by Stone in a form even less plausible than the original — which is saying a lot. It is simply wrong that the Nazi seizure of power was basically legal. And the case that 'Hitler seemingly had stumbled upon modern economics' (deficit finance, full employment, high collective consumption and low inflation), that rearmament was of secondary importance to economic recovery after 1933, will not stand up. Judgments like 'Hitler did not want to harm the British Empire' are typical of the daring provocations, which have become the basic currency of this kind of revisionism. As a summary of recent scholarly research and discussion, that particular judgment is pure travesty. It is the product of an irresponsible striving for effect, which seems to be the main *raison d'être* of the book. Psychologists, for example, have offered some revisionist interpretations of Hitler and Nazism, but Stone presents only the chat about Nazis' 'sex-lives', not the psychological argument which might make the chat (this time, the sources) meaningful.

Exactness is one test of the populariser's respect for his readership. Stone's book, especially parts I and II, contains dozens of small errors. Some of them, like the assertion that Schacht was opposed to planned foreign trade, have a function in supporting some untenable argument or other; but most of them, like the placing of a university in the town of Celle, the notion that Hitler wanted War Minister Blomberg to resign or that Schacht 'went to the Reichsbank' in 1938, are the random fruits of carelessness, which is eloquent about the author's attitude to his readers. Maybe only boring experts will notice this sort of thing. But even Sixth-formers may become suspicious when they are told on page 99 that the German army in the West in 1940 had 'only 52 . . . proper army divisions'. What are they to make of Fritz Reinhardt, State Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, who is introduced on page 53 as a 'Nazi economist' and appears three paragraphs later as one of the 'non-Nazi experts'? Or of the conservative politicians of Bavaria in the early 1920s, who change from 'decent and honourable men' on page 11 into 'men of seemingly impenetrable stupidity and seemingly endless guile' on page 13? Evidently it doesn't matter. Nothing actually matters very much. The chat must go on. There is no way of checking anything, since no references are given.

Is there nothing of value or interest in the book? There are some passages which make a bit of an effort to distill recent research into a few crystalline sentences. Most of these seem to me to get the emphasis slightly but decisively wrong, and to do so in the interests of a factually unwarranted but easily consumable clarity. Thus the conservative generals, slowing down re-armament and sharing Hitler's 'national aims', are out of focus on both occasions, as too is the regime's persecution of the Jews, which was distinctly less casual in its origins than Stone portrays it, without being planned. Quotability and balance are at odds with each other.

There is a long section, badly out of proportion, of straight military history, a type of terse strategic and battle narrative which seems to have many devotees among British readers. Unlike the rest of the book, this account, which concentrates upon the Russian front, seems highly competent in its own narrow way, and Stone is for once representing an informed consensus when he consistently stresses the significance of the tactical superiority of the German officer corps.

But nothing much is explained. Indeed, the presumed popular appetite for the allege quirkiness of modern politics and war make it desirable not to explain, to desist ostentatiously from doing so. Take for example the question of Hitler's personal popularity, one of the most important single facts about him. This Stone says in passing, 'defies analysis'. Purchasers of a biographical study might reasonably expect a little more defiance from the author.

James and Patience Barnes's study of the reception and translation of *Mein Kampf* in the UK and the USA before the war illustrates another aspect of the Hitler industry. Here a good scholarly article has been blown up and padded out with lengthy quotations into a small book. Why?

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John Berger

Eight Poems of Emigration

1
Peasant History

I tell you
all houses
are holes in an arse of stone

we eat off coffin lids

between evening star
and milk in a bucket
is nothing

the churn is emptied
twice a day

cast us
steaming
on the fields

2
Earth

the purple scalp of the earth
combed in autumn
and times of famine

the metal bones of the earth
extracted by hand

the church above the earth
arms of our clock crucified

all is taken

3
Departure

pain
cannot

endure long enough

tracks vanish
under snow
the white embrace
of leaving

I have tried to write the
truth on trains

without an ear
the tongue takes fright
clings to a single word

the train is crossing a bridge

black ice collects
on each letter
SAVA
my river

4
Metropolis

the edge of moonlight
sharp
like the level
of water in a canal

and the locks of reason
at dawn
when the level of the dark
is brought down
to that of the light

accept the dark
massed black
zone of blindness
accept its eyes

but here the dark
has been stolen in a sack
weighed down with a pebble
and drowned

there is no longer any dark

5
Factory

here
it is dawn eternally
hour of awakening
hour of revolutionary prophecy
hour of embers dead
time of the day's work
without end

there we built the night
as we lit the fire
lay down in it
pulled up the dark as blanket

near fields were
the breath of animals asleep
quiet as the earth
warm as the fire

cold is the pain of believing
warmth will never return

here
night is time forgotten
eternal dawn
and in the cold I dream
of how the pine
burnt
like a dog's tongue
behind its teeth

6
Waterfront

all night Hudson
coughs in bed

I try to sleep

my country
is a hide nailed to wood

the wind of soul rushes

out of horizons
I make a hammock

in sleep
I suck birth village
touch my river's curve

two black mackerel
pilot in
daybreak

gaff them sky gaff them

7
Absence

when the sun was no higher than
the grass
jewels hung in the trees
and the terraces turned rose

between fluorescent lights along
the ringroad
apartments hang their pietas
they are frying potatoes
a factory discharges its hands in
woollen gloves
there is a hole in my thumb

the vines are not green
the vines are not here
the jewels
crushed in high voltage wires
will be worn by the dead
DANGER DE MORT

8
Return

let me die like this

the branches have muscles
hills get up
the cloud pours
into a cup

in the forest wild boar
have eaten
are warm
and sleepy

each clearing is recorded
on a screen I carry
rolled like a cloth
in my head

a sheet
pulled over
the eyes of a dead
keeps out the look of the world

on the cloth
unrolled
I follow their spoor
in the forest I knew.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

John Spurling

Fools' Paradise

Stanley Spencer RA *Royal Academy*

Stanley Spencer was a very small person — under five feet tall — who painted on a grand scale. It was not just that he painted large canvases, but that he envisaged most of his work in series. When he was not actually carrying out a commission which involved sets of related paintings — as in the Burghclere chapel commemorating the First World War — he was filling the imagined aisles and side-chapels of his 'Church House'. The idea came into his mind when he was working at Burghclere in the 1920s and persisted until his death in 1959. Apart from the landscapes which he provided for his dealer to sell, nearly everything he did in the last quarter-century of his life related to this scheme. Perhaps it would have been too expensive for the RA (even with the generous assistance of *The Observer*) to have transformed Burlington House into a temporary version of 'The Church House', but it seems a missed opportunity, since presumably those scattered components of the *magnum opus* will not be assembled again for a long time.

Perhaps also it might have revealed too nakedly the real nature of Spencer's art. Presented as an exhibition of the familiar sort, in large, bare, well-lit rooms, the secular elements seem uppermost. Surely this is our 20th-century English Brueghel, observer and celebrator of village (or army or shipyard) life, master of the crowded figure painting? Of course the religious element is plainly visible throughout: in the early works based on passages from the Bible — *The Nativity, The Visitation,* etc.; in the three famous Resurrections; and in the late works such as *The Crucifixion* and the huge, unfinished *Christ Preaching at Cookham Regatta.* But from 1920 on, when Spencer first painted a religious theme in an unequivocally local and contemporary setting — *Christ Carrying the Cross* along the street beside his own family house in Cookham — the Christianity of the Bible and the established church is gradually transformed into the Church of Spencer, an altogether different thing.

The transformation had actually begun five years earlier with two ostensibly secular paintings — *Mending Cowls, Cookham* and *Swan Upping at Cookham.* Both paintings signal a new self-confidence in the artist. If the strangely mixed influences of pre-Raphaelites, Italian fresco-painters and Gauguin which come and go in the pre-First War work are not entirely eliminated, they are now put to wholly Spencerian use. Where before Spencer was painting religious or quasi-religious subjects in a homely, secular setting, his new work discovered religious feelings in a homely, secular subject. He conceived *Swan Upping* as he sat in church and wrote later that he wanted to take 'the in-church feeling out of church'. Yet as late as 1921, in *Christ Overturning the Money Changers' Table,* he was still painting a religious picture in a stylised 'Biblical' manner, without contemporary references.

In 1933 Spencer wrote to a patron:

> I think the war did for me all right . . . As far as there was any possibility of my doing any good as an artist I think the event and all my experience from that time and weakness of character in myself have been fatal in preventing this desirable result.'

It was an odd thing to say, considering that out of his war experience came the outstanding Burghclere murals as well as *The Resurrection, Cookham,* but he later modified it to mean that once he had completed those works his vision was used up.

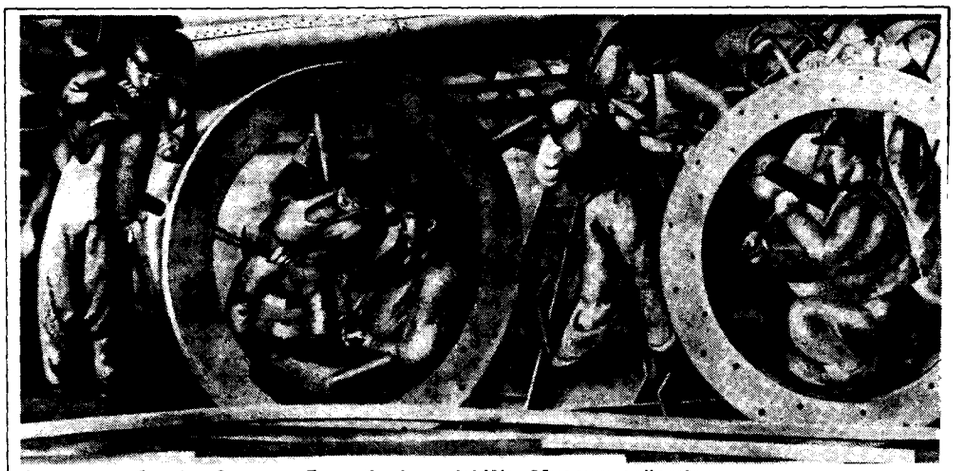
It has become as fashionable now to dismiss Spencer's sense of a lost vision as it once was to take him at his word. The truth is that his vision was a naive and childish one, did not stand up to adult analysis and that when he came to submit it to analysis in most of his later work he could see it was inadequate. Yet he was apparently powerless to develop or discard it. Spencer has been compared to Blake, but Blake's view of heaven and earth, however fictionalised, was at least centred on a God and based on a mature judgment of human nature. Spencer's was centred on himself as an infant and depended on innocence unsullied by experience. The feelings of a child looking over the edge of his protective pram constituted Spencer's revelation; it became as time went on a vision of hell masquerading as Paradise.

The snakes in Spencer's Eden were, obviously enough, sex and death. Equally obviously he attempted to sublimate them into universal love and earthly resurrection. One can see how in the Burghclere murals and *The Resurrection, Cookham,* with his naivety still about him, Spencer makes these ideas work in juxtaposition with the ordinary routines of army life and the simple reality of a village churchyard. But the moment he establishes them as the basis of his art/religion, the moment he sets up, even if only in imagination, his 'Church House', to be filled with scenes of Cookham life and Cookham love for the greater glory of Baby Spencer's Revelation, from that moment he is painting a lie. With some exceptions, the remainder of the exhibition is a grisly memorial to his knowledge of that fact and refusal to admit it.

The exceptions are all those paintings in which he is temporarily able to forget the Church of Spencer. They include the landscapes, where innocence is not called in question by the presence of humanity, the portrait-drawings, where his well-mastered Slade technique seems temporarily to banish self, and the commissioned paintings — e.g.. the Clyde shipbuilding series — which show people at work. The self-portraits are a special case. Their tone is set at the beginning of Spencer's career by the monumental head and neck, larger than life-size and staring straight out of the canvas, which was completed in 1914. Thereafter they constitute progress reports on this young Michelangelo, as age lines his skin, adds spectacles and whitens his hair. The challenging stare doesn't change, nor does the determined set of the lips, nor the boyish haircut: there is something mask-like about them, defensive, as if Spencer meant to show time's work on the outside without admitting any substantial alteration within.

In that, in a sense, they are honest, for there *was* no substantial alteration. Spencer's hell consisted in the fact that by all the laws of nature there should have been. He was not a naive painter and had not originally set out to be. In painting after painting one can see his skill, his command of space, composition an pattern growing by leaps and bounds, only t be hobbled and harnessed — like a stallion t a pram — to the awful simplemindedness c the Child Spencer. His crowd scenes, for a they are supposed to show peace and conten ment, seethe with aimless disturbance, lil machines turning their energy back c themselves; his individual figures, who gestures, actions and mutual glances are i tended to convey love and tenderness, are any objective standard monstrous dummi with waxen faces and swollen bodies a limbs, the staffage of some science ficti nightmare in which giant, mindless gnomes herit the earth or the bloated dead rise up smother the living with clumsy benevolence

Surely this artist despised and detest mankind? Why, then, didn't he set them op ly at each other's throats? Because, ultimate he couldn't take serious account of anyc beyond himself and his immediate family. T extraordinary double nudes of himself and second wife are also ambivalent — b gloating and loathing — but they are anodyne, not portraits of dolls: almost al



Riveters: **by Stanley Spencer. From the Imperial War Museum collection.**

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among Spencer's post-1933 paintings they face their own implications, tell the truth about his refusal to grow up. One of his last works was *The Crucifixion* commissioned for Aldenham School. Christ, his back to the viewer, is nailed to the cross by leering executioners in the middle of Cookham High Street, while the wicked thief spits insults directly into his face. Spencer told the boys at the school:

> I have given the men who are nailing Christ on the Cross — (and making sure that they make a good job of it) — Brewers' caps, because it is your Governors, and you, who are still nailing Christ to the Cross.

With that powerfully childish painting he at last admitted that the Church of Spencer was a fools' paradise.

Music

Andrew Clements

Ex Machina

Trevor Wishart *ICA*

'Music theatre' can cover a multitude of forms, from pieces in which the dramatic content is very subsidiary to the music and maximum drama, taking in small-scale but otherwise traditional operas on the way. But for the three pieces by Trevor Wishart put on for five evenings at the ICA (a hangover from the last MusICA series, of which a new season begins next month) no other label will do. The theatrical element is intimately worked with the music — to contemplate one without the other is unthinkable. The ideas behind the works are generally extra-musical and in the realisation of those lies the success or failure of the music. The advance publicity for the concert spoke rather hopefully of Wishart as 'unique in Britain for combining innovative musical techniques with performance-art imagery', and certainly there is a strong flavour of the British performance artists of the '60s and early '70s in his work, and equally an inheritance of their whimsy.

The ICA programme ran continuously, interspersing performances of the three theatre pieces with a potted biography of Wishart on slides and tape. The result was a comprehensive one and a half hour show, though the level of the taped commentary alternated the patronising with the musicologically detailed: the range of the composer's interests was suggested well. But I rather doubt that the live performances benefitted from it. Some of the recorded extracts of Wishart's earlier music showed a far greater aural imagination than could have been guessed from the presentations of *Fidelio, Tuba Mirum* and *Pastorale/Walden-2;* more worrying, the substance of these works declined in direct proportion to the elaboration of their theatrical packaging, until the construction of the stage effects appeared to have become more important than the composition of a sustained musical argument.

Those stage effects were never less than entertaining, however. The dramatic programme of each piece was clear-cut and easy to follow; the humour was light and unforced. But in each work the central idea seemed ever so slightly *passé,* stale and overworked — the double-edged consequences of technological progress in *Fidelio,* the use of psychiatric treatment as a weapon of repression in *Tuba Mirum*, the *reductio ad absurdum* of B. F. Skinner's ideas on Behaviourism in *Pastorale/Walden-2* — worthy targets all of them, but not treated by Wishart with any great profundity. Once the initial concept had been set up, the progress of each piece was predictable, and interest difficult to sustain. The magnificent mechanical clock that formed the centrepiece of *Pastorale/Walden-2,* whose resident flautist and tuba player repeat snatches of the *Kyrie* from Bach's B minor Mass at the direction of the behaviourist, is a fine imaginative construct, but to extend it into a substantial work of music theatre demands a less obvious, less simplistic programme than Wishart provided. Anyone might have guessed early on that the conditioned worms would eventually turn, that the fragments of Bach would become progressively distorted and the two players eventually find a way back to free, unprogrammed expression.

Pastorale/Walden-2 was the most recent of Wishart's pieces in the ICA programme, and perhaps will prove the culmination of a line in his development that has placed increasing reliance on a modern *deus ex machina.* Certainly the earlier works were less cluttered and carried greater musical freight. *Fidelio* was a simple, effective dramatic piece, owing more to Mauricio Kagel's work than the others did, taking as its starting point the final scene of Beethoven's opera, when a minister from the king arrives to release Florestan from prison, declaring all men to be brothers. 'A less grateful Florestan,' Wishart says, 'might have replied that the King is still the King.' But the piece is concerned specifically with technological liberation: a flautist sits alone on the stage improvising a gentle melody; an attendant gradually buries her in boxes containing cassette recorders playing back taped flute solos, she succumbs to the pressure and is eventually boxed up and removed. The idea again is simple, but the musical effect much greater.

The performer's improvisation is guided by the composer's basic material, reacting to the recorded flutes, and moving into different harmonic areas as each canned solo begins; the eventual triumph of mechanical reproduction is the logical and surprisingly satisfying outcome of the work.

Tuba Mirum presents more problems, and is perhaps the single work in the programme that would have rewarded repeated listening. The presentation is rather stagey. The hospital attendants seem an unnecessary extra, and the dramatic point of a tuba player confined to a basement cell in a mental hospital could have made more economically. The incarcerated player (in this performance the very accomplished Melvyn Poore) is unable to resist playing his instrument, and despite the use of many improvised mutes, including a very fetching velvet hat *à la* Wagner, he gropes towards a statement of the *Tuba mirum* plainsong. When after a torrent of instrumental effects he reaches it, the hospital attendants return to subdue him. The musical processes here suggested more subtlety and refinement; somewhere Wishart ought to be able to find a happy compromise between spectacular indulgence and serious musical thought.

Theatre

Benedict Nightingale

Quaint Clarion

Watch on the Rhine by LILLIAN HELLMAN *Lyttelton*
Oklahoma by RODGERS AND HAMMERSTEIN *Palace*
Samba by MICHAEL ABBENSETTS *Tricycle, N.W.6*

One would have thought we had quite enough home-grown nostalgia in the British theatre just now without having to import yet more from America. But that's the sort of week it turned out to be. Back we went to turn-of-the-century Oklahoma, where the good, clean guys were singing vaguely avaricious songs to and about themselves ('I've got a beautiful feeling, everything's going my way') and disposing of their rivals in love by inciting them to hang themselves. Back to Washington DC in the early 1940s, when the Hitler war seemed to be partly a somewhat bloody romance by Baroness Orczy, partly an awkward obstacle in the race towards an attainable utopia. It was a week that left one feeling older, not to say sadder, than one's forefathers.

Lillian Hellman's purpose in writing *Watch on the Rhine* was the entirely admirable one of awakening the American public to events in war-torn Europe and making it feel guilty about its detachment, its comforts, its petty worries, its squeamishness, and much else. Here's a family of refugees for whom a good breakfast is a few buns, and political murder an unfortunate moral obligation; and here's the blithe household which must be, and is, converted to militant anti-Nazism. But yesterday's clarion-call is apt to sound quaintly in today's ears; and it now seems only too evident that the lack of realism and reality Miss Hellman found in her fellow-citizens seriously compromises her own play.

How, as an intelligent woman, could she possibly believe that a modern Scarlet Pimpernel might infiltrate a German concentration-camp and wangle the release of three important terrorists? Or, for that matter, that those prisoners could keep totally mum about their anti-fascist activities, and yet live to fight another day? And how, as a moderately accomplished playwright, could she hang so much of her plot on the kind of blackmailing hound who hies from smooth-tongued Rumania and expresses his true callousness by purring at his wife, 'How many times have you seen me angry? You will not wish to see another'? That Hellman proves garrulous in setting up her plot, and sometimes rambling in developing it, does not greatly matter. The trouble is the German Pimpernel's cutely precocious younger son, his winningly wayward mother-in-law, the sentimentality, the calculated pathos of the ending, the persistent melodrama. Peggy Ashcroft has some exquisite moments; Susan Engel, playing her daughter, some solidly sentient ones; and David Burke, Miss Engel's hero-husband, a furrowed intensity that often rings true; but their collective efforts can't

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finally disguise that Miss Hellman's debt was too little to the ill-made world, too much to the well-made play.

Moreover, how are we — who are doomed to share the planet with Pol Pot, General Pinochet and the Cruise missile — to react to the protagonist's last-gasp promise of a free and happy future, in which all men will die in bed? At best, with rueful envy for a less cynical era: rather the same hankering that, I suppose, explains some of the success of the infinitely more ingenuous *Oklahoma* actually in that era. How comforting its celebration of innocence — a world of cowboys marvelling at 'skyscrapers' seven storeys high — must have seemed in the anxious America of 1942 and among glum middle-class Britons in 1947. How pleasant an escape from the Thatcherite murk the first-night audience appeared to find it last week.

Actually, it has Thatcherite, or perhaps Reaganesque, aspects itself. To the wholesome, capable and deserving much shall be given, while from the poor, troubled and undeserving all shall be taken away: job, self-respect, even life itself. It's difficult not to feel some sympathy with Jud Fry, whose faults are to be a hired hand and an outsider, to have a Heathcliffian capacity for emotion, to direct it at the boss-woman, and to sit 'crawling and festering' inside his room instead of riding broncos, joining in outdoor dances, and chanting trite tributes to the dawn, like everyone else. Who can blame him for collecting 'dirty' pictures when all the local lasses look as if they've scrubbed their faces as well as their teeth with Pepsodent? And when he makes the leap from fantasy to reality and actually falls for a living female, his reward is to be snubbed, insulted, told to commit suicide, sacked, stabbed by the smiling hero, and posthumously blamed for the affray by as biased and off-handed a judge as even 'Indian territory' can have produced. We left the theatre with those perky, fetching tunes dancing up and down our eustachian tubes; but also, some of us, understanding a little better why Oklahoma will probably go for big Ronnie this fall.

The Wakefield Tricycle Company has converted an old music-and-dance hall into a permanent theatre, and a very agreeable place it is, with its orange scaffolding, royal-blue canvas, comfy pews in two tiers, and general adaptability. Performance can be staged in the 'round', or on the west side of a rectangle, as was the case with the opening production last week. *Samba,* by one of our leading black playwrights, involves a West Indian who achieved a dubious renown in the 1950's with his successful but meretricious South American band, which he did not scruple to tour to South Africa. Since then, public taste has upped and his fortunes downed, and now he runs a mini-cab firm and dreams of the comeback that, as it somewhat sentimentally turns out, begins to look likely towards the end. It is an open-minded, good-humoured and mainly very enjoyable piece that could still, I think, do with more toughness when it comes to such subjects as racial identity, cultural integrity, and the generation gap.

Kenneth Chubb's production, in which Norman Beaton and Angela Bruce flaunt their talents with special brio, runs until October 18, after which comes the first of what will be regular visits by touring companies, in this case the admirable Paines Plough. It looks as if north London has got itself a theatre that matters.

Television

Julian Barnes

Yoyo

I'm sorry to be late on the new BBC-1 comedy series, but it was misleadingly labelled. After *Not the Nine O'Clock News . . . The Greeks*, an extravaganza still too obviously Python-based, but rapidly finding its feet. The second episode of this series (subtitled, with subversive grandness, 'A Journey — in Space and Time') began with a clever parody sequence which wove together all our most banal preconceptions about Greece: Freddie Jones, in a wirewool beard and a tinsel laurel crown, pretended to be Socrates; the sun rose and set, rose and set over the olive groves like a blood-red yoyo; and lots of modern Greeks Zorbaed around carrying a spitted pig at shoulder height. In case anyone *still* thought the show was meant to be A-level stuff, the lingering shots of all those old buildings they have out there were hintingly backed by Bach, Vivaldi, and so, inappropriately, on.

The programme loosely takes the form of a competition. First, some professional actors walk up and down, trying to look as much like actors and as little like ancient Greeks as possible: Stephen Murray, for instance, Wolfited through 'Thucydides' in a nice off-the-shoulder towelling number with a slit up the back, as if he had wandered in from some dubious Manhattan bath-house. Then Sir Kenneth Dover and Christopher Burstall walk up and down, trying (it is the harder task) to look like actors hired to play academics. They do this miraculously well, especially the standing-around-awkwardly bits, and those points at which one says casually to the other, 'What was the influence of Plato on his time?', and at the moment of answer they both start walking: as if passion for the subject fuelled simultaneously both minds and legs.

Sir Kenneth, who won hands down, is actually a star find. He acted to perfection the puzzled frown of the don who's been brought to Syracuse harbour to explain the naval battle, but then made to sit in a small rowing boat opposite a picturesque oarsman, a position from which it is clearly impossible to explain strategy. At the end, he cued in the best surreal sketch of the evening to illustrate the Periclean concepts of equality and freedom. These were explained by a film collage comprising a baby being born, Khrushchev speaking at the United Nations, an astronaut free-floating in deep space, and Patrick Gordon Walker being vaguely attacked at a rally. *Now* I see why they teach Greek in schools.

For the moment, we're reserving judgment on the other teach-yourself series, *The Shock of the New* (BBC-2), presented by Robert Hughes. We aren't going to mention surfboards, or Kennedys, or limbs that are hinged, not jointed. Nor are we going to speculate on that schizophrenic opening sequence, in which Hughes pronounced a monster sentence to camera and at every comma switched clothes and background cities.

Instead, we'll just say that the commentary was solid-to-phrasey, and that in the first episode, as in a Christmas stocking, the good things came towards the end. There was a long sweeping trawl across the dials and panels of a power station, while Marinetti's praise of the new beauty of such institutions was read in voiceover: the visuals helped make his point exactly. And there was the ever-fascinating sight of Marcel Duchamp talking: though it was strange that of all the artists discussed, only he — who abandoned modern art so thoroughly, and perhaps only ever half-believed in it in the first place — was represented on film. Wouldn't the research budget stretch to finding clips of Picasso or Braque? It seems to stretch to almost everything else, as is the way with Munich-Time-Life co-productions.

Parkinson (BBC-1) returned with extra potted plants floping over his set. His first three guests were Power, Beauty and Fame (Denis Healey, Sian Phillips and Lee Marvin). Seasoned Parky-watchers, of course, have long given up listening to his guests' replies, and instead feast on the questions. Healey attracted the best ones this time. The winner came after Healey had told a dull story about how Churchill once ruffled Attlee at the despatch box by kneeling down, crawling around on all fours, and finally surfacing with the explanation, 'Excuse me, Mr Speaker, I was looking for my jujube.' Collapse of entire studio (Red Cross men move in, etc), leading to a Parky classic: 'Is there that kind of quality in the House today?'

Films

John Coleman

Giocoso?

Don Giovanni (A) *Academy One*
Dressed to Kill (X) *Odeon, Leicester Square*

Opera is notoriously difficult to film. The most theatrical of the arts, in that it requires the audience to accept an even larger conglomeration of conventions (or absurdities, depending on one's point of view) than does ballet, . might almost have been designed to resist translation to the big screen. For the cinema has its own traditions and conventions: it tends towards naturalism and it has yet taught us to accept such 'absurdities' as the close-up without leaping from our seats. In taking on the filming of possibly the most famous of all operas, Joseph Losey made one crucially sensible decision: to pre-record the singing — except for the passages of recitativ — not merely to avoid the sight of strained faces and throbbing throats but also to allow the singers to concentrate on their acting. Nor was he bogged down by any memories of previous productions — 'I have never seen *Don Giovanni* on the stage'. The result is a film that has apparently offended musical purists, particularly in the States, though no less a Mozartian than Karl Boehm is said to admire it greatly; it bothered the BBC, who felt it was not 'definitive' (as Bergman's *Magic Flute*, to corporate eyes and ears, *was*) it leaves me both impressed and questioning.

From Rolf Liebermann, until last season head of the Paris Opera, Losey inherited the formidable cast and the Orchestra and Chorus of the Opera under Lorin Maazel and, since Losey found the idea of shooting in Sevi

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unappealing, an early alternative was discovered: the villas of Palladio in and around Vicenza in north-east Italy. These rigidly geometrical structures with their framing coolness are a key to Losey's procedures. Time and again, characters are set mid-screen in windows, arched doorways, at the end of long, perspectived passages, the architecture imposing a restraint on the more fanciful movements, comic and tragic alike, of the tangled plot. But not all is posed, fixed, as it were frozen while the high arias take their toll; as often, the rich frescoes of the Villa Rotonda are traversed, as when Donna Anna (a chill performance from Edda Moser) paces around, magnificently rendering 'Or sai chi l'onore'. By and large, so long as the action stays within high rooms — or, for the difficult scene of the confrontation and unmasking of a rather muted Leporello (José van Dam, in superb voice) by Donna Anna, a wooden Don Ottavio (Kenneth Riegel), and a marvellously whacky Donna Elvira (Kiri Te Kanawa), briefly resorts to the Teatro Olimpico — all works persuasively enough. The opening behind the overture, with Don Giovanni visiting a glass factory at Murano, accompanied by Donna Anna, is ingenious and an echo of its flames resounds in the Don's come-uppance at the stone hand of the Commendatore.

But there is always the temptation to open out, especially when such picturesque locations are to hand and eye, and it is here that Losey may be accused of undercutting the music in the cause of 'making pictures'. Perhaps the most wrongheaded instance of landscape taking procedure over Mozart occurs in Don Ottavio's 'Il mio tesoro', where the singer goes for a long ramble through fields parsimoniously strewn with drunken peasants. Elsewhere, 'business' is sometimes provided intrusively, servants bustling past with a carpet, mounting a ladder to take down funereal black veiling from a piece of statuary; against this, there are some thoroughly welcome notions, of which perhaps the finest has the Don and his man patrolling the kitchens, a table full of menials applauding at the end of a song.

Mozart called this opera a *dramma giocoso,* shifting as it does between *opera seria* and *opera buffa.* One of the more startling elements of Losey's production is that it should stay, for the most part, well this side of levity. The initial comic promise of Kiri Te Kanawa's Elvira is unevenly developed, almost as if the director were experiencing an overdose of reverence, only allowed a mischievous late look-in as the importunate, ill-done-by lady pokes her head through a high window into the grand hall where the Don is having his last dinner. Leporello is rarely merry, though the massive unrolling of linked pages of names, down a great flight of steps, as he sings of his master's conquests, is excellently found. One could have supported more touches like this and the casual lounging of the Don and his man over a sleeping naked woman as Giovanni emphasises his utter need for the ladies at all times. But what of Ruggero Raimondi's Don? It is certainly a solid, baleful creation, convincingly obsessed, strongly ruthless, capable of conveying the necessary intransigence to the fiery end. What's lacking, to my taste, is any sense of erotic charm. The somewhat matronly and insecure Zerlina of Teresa Berganza (her celebrated 'Batti, batti, o bel Masetto' is enormously helped by the playing of Malcolm King as her betrothed) would hardly — on the face of Raimondi's wooing — have wilted so rapidly. But, then, there is always the *voice* of Raimondi, delivering 'La ci darem la mano' as if he were thinking it for the first time, to compensate for an inadequacy in physical magnetism. The balance sheet of Losey's *Don Giovanni,* which must — after all — be seen as an attempt to reach out to a far larger audience than the cosy metropolitan coteries of opera-goers, shows firmly in the black.

Brian De Palma, the brattiest of those Stateside movie brats, has not been backward in the past in paying homage to Hitchcock, if one may so term the blatant borrowing of effects from that master of the pre-planned shock. De Palma also likes to go into shooting a movie with the whole affair written down and story-boarded to the ultimate camera-angle, or so the rumour goes. *Dressed to Kill,* which he wrote and directed, has a genial title and one wordless sequence in an art gallery that goes on for nearly half an hour and earns its length as a *tour de force.* References to *Psycho* fall so thick and fast — *two* shower-episodes, a maniac killer in drag, *two* blondes, etc. — that an inevitable comparison is invited, to De Palma's detriment. An empty pair of shoes, binoculars passim, a turning doorknob figure as dramatically as Michael Caine, Angie Dickinson (in a sexually stirring passage of wicked power) and Nancy Allen. Good in fragments — elsewhere, parasitism and silliness.

NEW STATESMAN
Ballet/Modern Dance Critic

The NS intends to appoint a critic in the field of ballet and modern dance. The post is not a salaried one and will require about 10 reviews a year. Applicants should write to the Literary Editor enclosing a brief statement of their qualifications and examples of their published work in the field.

Weekend Competition

No 2636 **Set by Dan Kavanagh**

It was recently pointed out — by Peter Paterson in Another Weekly — that there are extremely few Trade Union Jokes. The only one he knew was about the trade union official who was in hospital and was told that his executive had passed a resolution urging him to get well soon: five for, five against, and ten abstentions. You can enter anything from one-liners to extended union stories of up to 150 words; but don't try and get away with any resprayed Irish jokes or you'll be out on your ear. By 10 October.

No 2633 **Set by Russell Lucas**

Mnemonic rhymes establishing the sequence of as many American Presidents, British Prime Ministers, Poets Laureate or Heavyweight Boxing Champions as can be accommodated in 14 lines.

Report **By Jeff Squiffy**

Jeff Squiffy writes from the Languedoc: Lots of *vin rouge* for me. No room for you. Nine pounds for the winners.

O Poet, live in glory great and never be a Laureate
But shrink in dread from Dryden's fate when he
for court would cater
Where Shadwell, Tate and Rowe orate as boozy
Eusden bangs his plate
And Cibber clobbers Whitehead's pate while
Warton woos the wiater:
Despise the Pye that Southey ate, where
Wordsworth's birds of Nature prate,
Where Tennyson a-tilting sate, unhorsed by Austin
later;
Like Bridges, brave the Traitor's Gate, defuse they
Muse, and bite no bait
When Masefield, racing up the straight, invites
the imitator,
Nor, like Day Lewis, sublimate from red of dawn
to bluish slate,
But blaze and blast in love and hate, O vast
volcano-crater:
For those who etch our earthly state, John
Betjeman's the man to date —
But for a Licence To Create, apply to thy Creator!

GINA BERKELEY

Dryden first, all R.C.-versey;
Was Shadwell bad? Well, even worsey
Were Tate 'n' later Rowe (who mused) 'n'
Stationary Laurence Eusden;
Golly! Colley-wobbles Cibber;
Silly Willy Whitehead, nibber;
Warton awful piece of Pye;
Southey went off west to die.
What of Wordsworth? Not worth any.
Tennyson's were ten-a-penny;
Austin's better burnt; 'tis Bridges;
Masefield lived to a prodigious
Age. Day-Lewis knew his text,
But Betje, man, fair Ayres is next.

BILL GREENWELL

A is for Asquith who said wait and see
Lloyd George build homes for heroes like me.
L is for Law who wanted things quiet.

Woe to MacDonald's socialist diet!
Eventually Baldwin, pipe-smoking and hearty;
Ramsay MacDonald, a frock-coated smarty.
Ever 'trust me' Baldwin popped in again;

Umbrellas went up for Nev Chamberlain,
Succeeded by Churchill — bluster and sabre;
Entry for Attlee and sound right-wing Labour
Lo, Churchill again — and all that he'd rue is
Eden the hatter, blundering at Suez,
Saved by Macmillan's 'Never had it so good'
Soon to be Home and back in the wood.

P.W.R. FOOT

Tony Miles

Chess

No 199 **July Problems**

The July problems were the easiest set for a long time — a terrible error of planning on my part — with not a single really testing position.

Problem 187 (3q2k1/3rrpp1/pp1p3p/3b4/PPNPpQ2/4P2P/5PP1/2R2RK1) came from my game with Gonzales Mestres from Las Palmas. Black had just played R(K1)-K2 hoping to be able to oppose the QB file from QB2. Unfortunately this created a momentary back rank weakness which I quickly exploited with 1.NxNP! QxN; 2.R-B8ch, R-Q1. (2 . . . K-R2; 3.Q-B5ch, P-N3; 4.Q-B6, R-Q1; 5.P-R5! is just a worse variety of the same disease. However 4.QxB though also good, did not get full credit.) 3.P-R5! and Black must surrender his queen. Probably the best way is 3 . . . Q-B2 (!) but he was not that imaginative and the game concluded 3 . . . RxR; 4.PxQ, R-B3; 5.Q-B5! B-K3; 6.Q-QR5! Resigns. (A pity really — I hoped for 6 . . . P-Q4; 7.P-N5! PxP; 8.Q-R8ch, R-B1; 9.P-N7.)

Problem 188 (2k2brr/1ppbqp2/2np4/

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1B2p1p1/Q3P3/2PPB1p1/P2N1PP1/RR4K1) was a good old-fashioned queen sac and king hunt: 1.Q-R8ch, N-N1; 2.QxPch!! (of course B-R7 is playable but it does give Black a breathing space after . . . PxPch and . . . BxB and can hardly be compared to the text), KxQ; 3.BxBch, K-R1 (or . . . R-R3; 4.B-B8ch, K-R4; 5.N-B4ch, K-R5; 6.R-N4mate); 4.Rx-Nch! KxR; 5.RN1ch, K-R1, 6.B-B6mate and, being an old game, doubtless gold sovereigns were showered on the pitch.

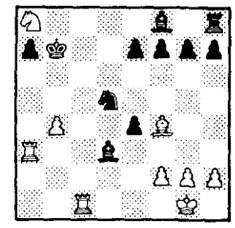
Problem 189 (r1q3kr/1p4p1/p1p2R1p/5p2/6PP/P3Q3/1P4P1/3R3K) was another golden oldie. This time both rooks go with 1.R-Q8ch! QxR (on . . . K-R2 White doesn't bother with the queen but continues merrily with 2.RxPch! PxR; 3.Q-K7ch, K-N3; 4.PR5mate); 2.Q-K6ch, K-R2; 3.RxPch! PxR; 4.Q-B7mate. It is true that 1.Q-N3ch, K-R2; 2.Q-B7 (threatening RxPch) is strong but Black has a defence in . . . Q-K1 and so it certainly didn't score any points.

Problem 190 (4r3/1q2p2k/p2pNpp1/1pln4/2r1R1P1/2P2R1P/PPQ4K/8) was the least simple of the four (even harder without the WN on the diagram!). White blasts his way to the black king with 1.RxR, PxR; 2.R-B5!! and Black resigned, having no good defence to the threat of 3.R-R5ch. For example (a) 2 . . . K-N1; 3.RxN, K-B2 (or QxR, Qx-Pch); 4.N-B4. (b) 2 . . . K-R1; 3.R-R5ch! PxR; 4.Q-N6, R-KN1; 5.Q-R6mate. (c) 2 . . . K-R3; 3.Q-Q2ch and RxN. (d) 2 . . . PxR; 3.QxPch, K-R1 (. . . K-R3; 4.Q-R3; 4.Q-R6mate); 4.Q-R5ch or Q-N6 mating.

Being an easy set all minor errors or omissions were heavily penalised. So £8 each to the meticulous Messrs Cornforth, Deshmukh, Garfath, Hughson, Sahasrabudhe and Taylor.

Problem 199

White has just played 1.B(Q)2-B4. Is this (a) bad, (b) good or (c) desperate? How should Black continue? (Plausible lines only necessary.) Answers to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked no later than 8 October.

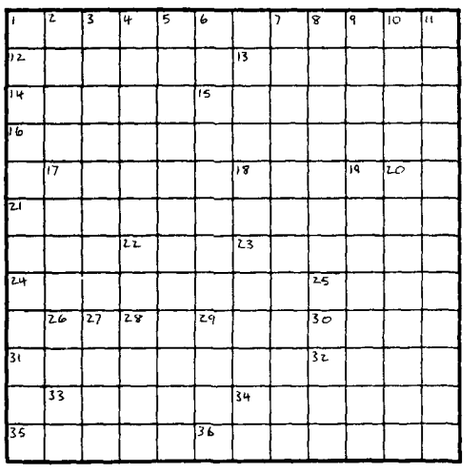


Solution to problem 197

1.RxRch, QxR (or . . . BxR; either 2.Q-K7, B-B2; 3.N-K4 or simply 2.QxBP should be decisive); 2.N-K4! QxN; 3.Q-Q8ch, Q-K1; 4.Q-N5ch, Q-N3; 5.QxR. Resigns.

Salamanca 34 'O!'

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Salamanca 34 New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 7 October.



'The hare runs — who knows where he goes?' (The setter of the riddle knows.) Inscribe a dot for every O. Then number each one row by row And left to right in order so: 1,14,17,2,3,4,6,5,13,15,16,10,7,12, 11,9,8; With lines join dots 1-2-3. . . 17-1, and there You will behold the hidden hare!

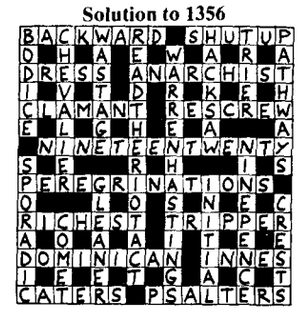
ACROSS

2 Ken's wig, ill-fitting, might cause this? (6)
7 Clairvoyant (Mac), from looking back, receives reward (5)
12 See brave Lancelot i.e. no love etc. bears for me (6)
13 Fabric that's used with edging (5)
14 Some rather unearthly sign (4)
15 Lacking voice, with a complicated chin op required? (7)
16 Tree of moor and fell (7)
17 Reeling in fish (3)
18 To court by deception mostly — Othello? (6)
21 Scots to clamber up larches with difficulty (9)
22 Held by l'ami formé dans les guerres? (9)
24 One attracted by soak mostly out-of-the-way — a woodlouse? (6)
25 Girl friend for i.e. year? (3)
29 I'm enthroned in the main? (7)
31 Flags etc — see them at bases' extremes surrounding moon-craft (7)
32 Opponent's one for avoiding so? (4)
33 About South Africa given throw? (5)
34 Pack small measure of coarse fabric (6)
35 Jade wood? No, a white flower (5)
36 Harper is truly unacceptable when blundering (6)

DOWN

1 Nasty reply letter's containing indulgently (12)
3 Monkey to bewilder with pair of spectacles? (8)
4 Bleach used in this — lower half more gluey? (4)
5 Idea on our pen coming out as language (12)
6 Adolescent, not old one — I see (6)
7 Hols over, Alec? Perhaps, but *I* won't-be going back! (12)
8 Ca' to kye to join up round tap of rickle (4)
9 'Nippy' hippie? One fashionable and acceptable (4)
10 Issue of Time Out? (4)
11 Remembering giving details of instrument put up for one (12)
17 Poets to make up this need time (4)
19 Addenda also found in total copy for printer (8)
20 Descriptive of some woods — birds quit my leaves so stricken (4)
23 Fellow with large extremes, of doubtful repute like Falstaff? (6)
26 Tree among broom bushes (4)
27 See man toss up old coin (4)
28 Jar quite round in elevation (4)
30 Garment — it's endlessly wanton (4)

Solution to 1356



Prizewinners to No 1356

Miss Sally Bradley (Teddington)
P.J. Casey (Liverpool)
Miss M. N. Hatton
(St Leonards-on-Sea)

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Further details and application form from:
The Personnel Officer, NCVO, 26 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3HU. Tel: 01-636 4066.
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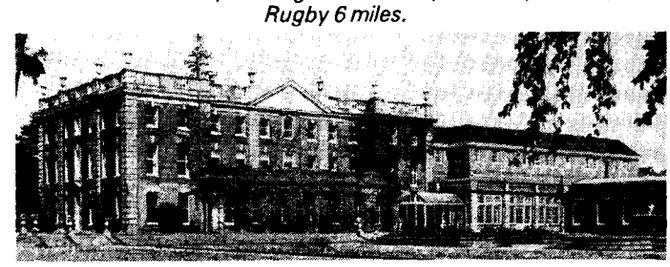

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Theatres

ALDWYCH THEATRE Royal Shakespeare Company 836 6404. Recorded booking info 836 5332. S. cc 379 6233 (10-6, Sats 10-4). From Wed low price previews 'Juno and The Paycock' by Sean O'Casey. RSC also at The Warehouse (836 6808) From Thurs., premiere production 'No Limits to Love' by David Mercer. RSC also at The Piccadilly Theatre in Willy Russell's hilarious 'Educating Rita'.

HAMPSTEAD THEATRE. 722 9301. British Premiere of 'Traitors' by Stephen Sewell. Prevs to 1 Oct. 8 p.m. Press night 2 Oct. 7 p.m.

NATIONAL THEATRE. 928 2252. Olivier (open stage) 'Amadeus', 'Galileo', 'Othello',. Lyttelton (proscenium stage) 'Watch on the Rhine', 'The Elephant Man'. Cottesloe (small auditorium) 'The Passion' part I (Creation to Nativity), 'The Passion' part II (Baptism to Judgement). See daily press for dates and times or ring recorded information 928 2256.

OLD VIC. 928 7616. cc 261 1821. 'S'. 26 Sept. & 1, 2, 3 Oct. at 7.30; 27 Sept. 2.00: Peter O'Toole in 'Macbeth'. Directed by Bryan Forbes. 27, 29, 30 Sept. at 7.30; 1 Oct. at 2.00: Timothy West & Maureen O'Brien in 'The Merchant of Venice'.

THEATREGOERS – please note: cc – credit cards; S-Student standby.

Cinema

SCREEN ON THE HILL. 435 3366 (opp. Belsize Park Tube). Fassbinder's 'The Marriage of Maria Braun' (AA). 2.10, 4.30, 6.50, 9.10. Ring 435 9787.

Meetings

CENTRAL LONDON FABIAN SOCIETY. Meeting Wed. 1 Oct., 7.30 p.m. at Mary Ward House, 5 Tavistock Place, WC1. Vince Cable of the ODI speaks on 'Labour's Narrow Nationalism'. Contact: Helen Price 870 2233 (Bus. hrs).

ICA EVENTS, the Mall, SW1. 27 Sept. 6.00-7.00 Jeremy Reed performs his poetry; 30 Sept. 7.30 Stephen & Christine Hugh-Jones of Cambridge University discuss Indian Religion & Liberation Theology. Tkts £1.00. Tel. 01-930 3647.

LABOUR MIDDLE EAST COUNCIL. Open Meeting on Palestine. Thursday 2 October, 6 p.m., Imperial Hotel, Blackpool. Chairman: David Watkins MP. Panel of speakers including the Mayor of Nablus Bassam Shaka.

LEFTA Tea Meeting Blackpool. Rt Hon. Joel Barnett MP speaks on Economic Policy for the next Labour Government. Windsor Bar, Winter Gardens, 5.15 p.m. Tues. 30 Sept. Adm. 50p.

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for pamphlets, book list, programme. Sun. 28 Sept. 8 p.m. Informal Q/A Meeting: 'Reincarnation and Karma'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2.

PRACTISE & PROCEDURES & the Employment Appeals Tribunal, speaker Sir Gordon Slynn, 2 Oct. 7 p.m. Edgar Wallace Pub, Essex St, EC4. Free Representation Unit, 353 3697.

RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA CENTRE: Sunday lectures on religion and philosophy. Enquiries 06285 26464.

URBAN TRANSPORT IN UK & EUROPE: Seminar 11 Oct. 10.30 a.m.-4.30 p.m. Fabian Society, 11 Dartmouth St, SW1. With Andrew MacIntosh, Stephen Plowden, Peter White, Meyer Hillman, Ewart Parkinson. Tel. 01-222 8877.

VIETNAM – The Reality Behind the Myths. A one-day discussion on Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea & SE Asia, with workshops & discussion of media coverage. Speakers include journalists, MPs, Oxfam, researchers. Sat. 18 Oct. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. University of London Union, Malet St, WC1. Credentials (£1; OAPs, students, unemployed 50p) from Britain-Vietnam Association, North Downs, Bluebell Hill, Nr Rochester, ME5 9RA (Medway 61575).

WEST LONDON ANTI-APARTHEID – Public Meeting 3 Oct., 8 p.m. Chiswick Town Hall, Heathfield Terrace, W4. 'The Arms & Nuclear Connection with South Africa'. Speaker – Jonathon Bloch – Film – Discussion.

THE NEW HOUSING CRISIS
WHAT LABOUR MUST DO
Meeting called by Shelter and CHAR. **Mon. 29 September 6 p.m. at Labour Party Rooms, 19 Springfield Rd, Blackpool.** Speakers: **Roy Hattersley MP, Allan Roberts MP, Neil McIntosh.** Chairman: **Joe Dean MP.**

Labour Party Conference

Radio and Television for the People: The Labour Party and the future of the BBC and the IBA. A meeting organised by Time Out (Radio Section), Local Radio Workshop and the Independent Film-makers Association. Speakers include **Austin Mitchell MP, Phillip Whitehead MP. Monday, 29 September, Board Room, Hotel and Guest House Association, Coronation Street, Blackpool, 7.30 pm.**

Political Publications

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Mon. 29 Sept. 5 p.m.
Lawrence Durrell
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(Faber & Faber £9)
"A Smile in the Mind's Eye"
(Wildwood House £3.95)
Wed. 1 Oct. 12 noon
Ralph Steadman & Bernard Stone
"Inspector Mouse"
(Andersen Press £3.50)
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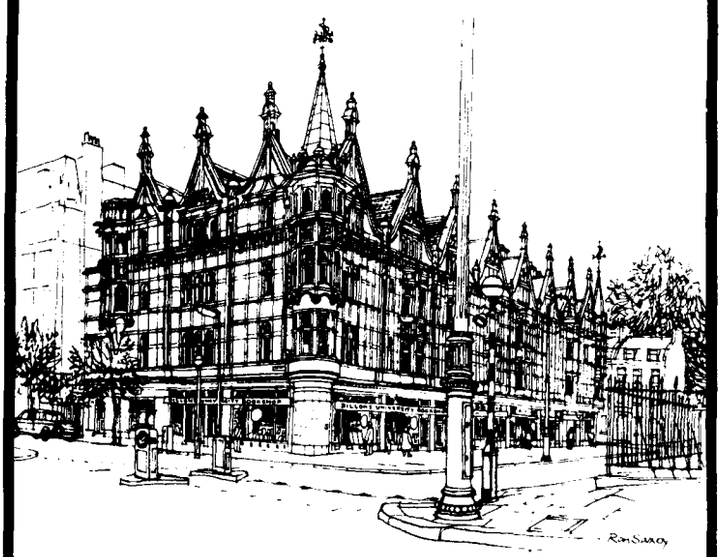

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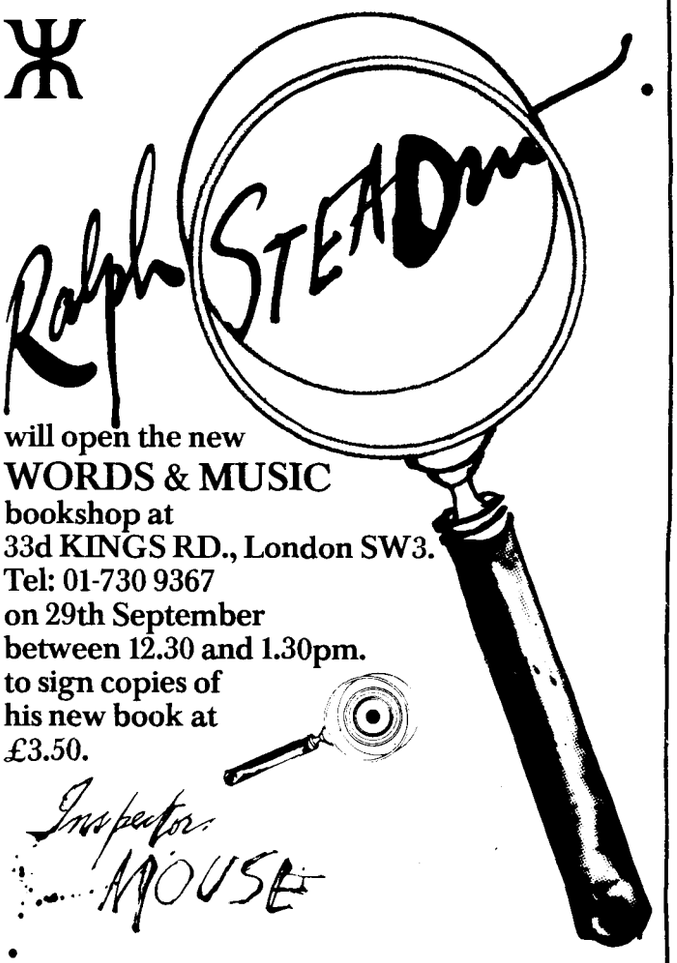

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